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SHIELD

What went wrong and what comes next?

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KATNISS
WHO?

Shailene Woodley on YA upstart Divergent

CAPTAIN AMERICA

THE WINTER SOLDIER BECAME MARVEL'S DEADLIEST SEQUEL

CAPTAIN AMERICA

HOW THE WINTER SOLDIER BECAME MARVEL'S DEADLIEST SEQUEL

SECRETS LEAKED

UNDERCOVER EXCLUSIVE

UNDERCOVER EXCLUSIVE

SLEEPY HOLLOW IS TWIN PEAKS MEETS BUFFY"

...all on the

Star reveals all on the spooky new cop show's TV takeover

SECRETS LEAKED

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RISE OF AN EMPIRE

Behind the scenes on Snyder's shirtless sequel

ALSO INSIDE:

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ARTHUR C. CLARKE //

GERRY ANDERSON //

THE NEVER //
ENDING STORY

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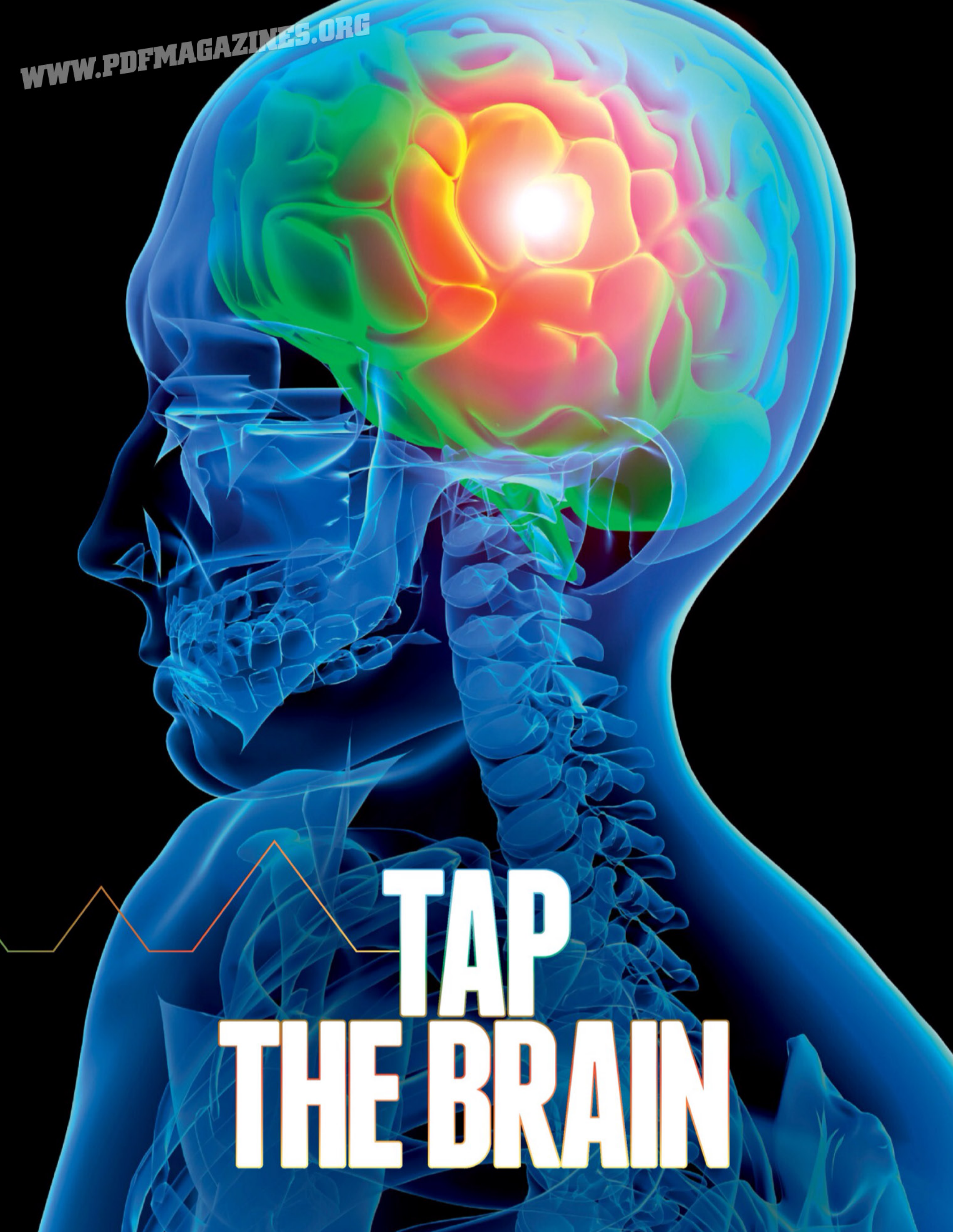
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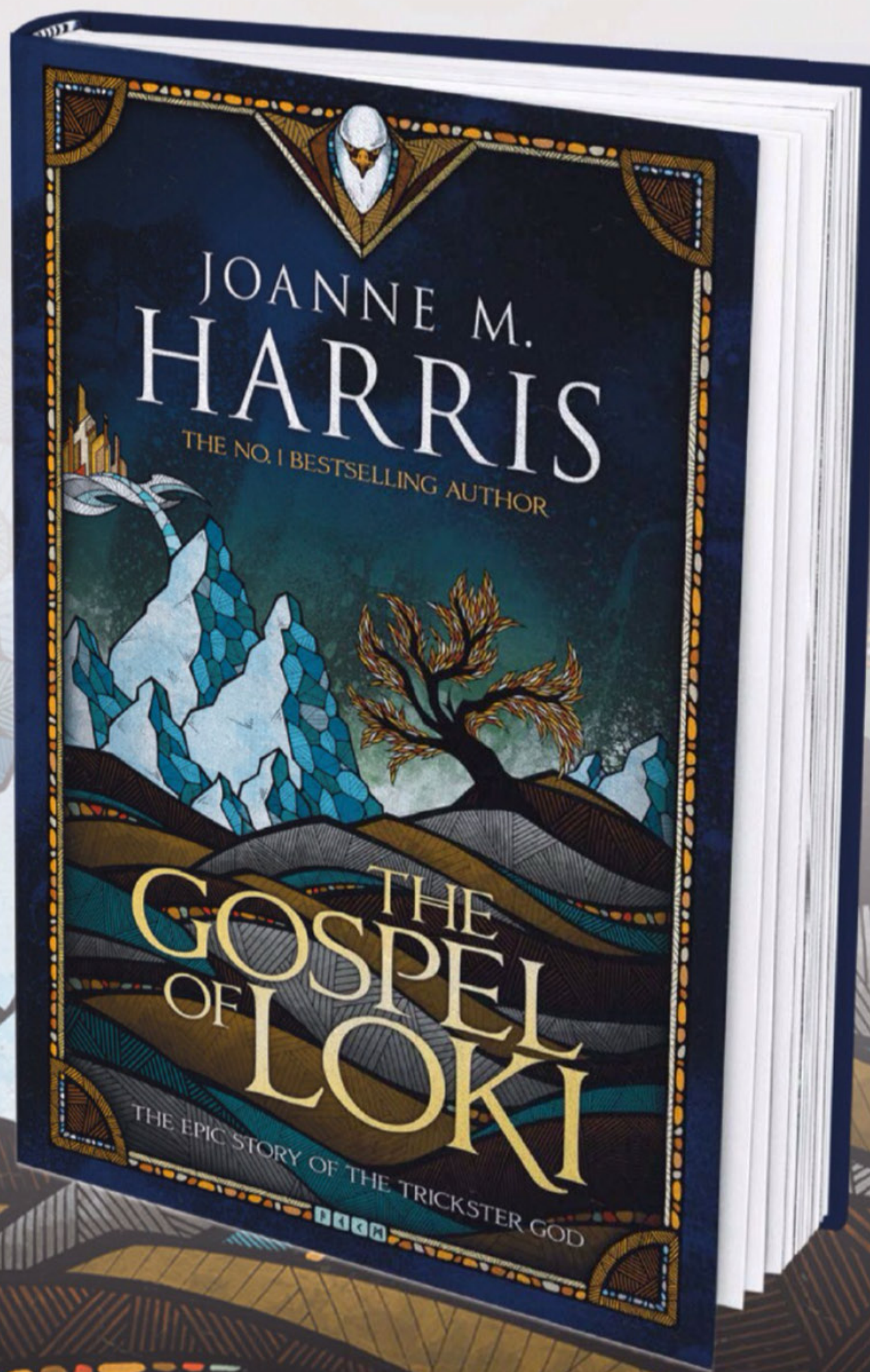
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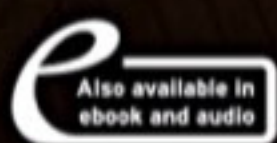


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GET EXCITED ABOUT HANNIBAL: SEASON TWO

The first season of Bryan Fuller's *Hannibal* didn't go as expected. Sure, Will Graham (Hugh Dancy) worked out that Dr Lecter (Mads Mikkelsen) had been pulling the strings, but it came at the cost of both his sanity and freedom. With Will behind bars, we're looking at a very different dynamic when it returns to Sky Living in the spring.

James
James Hoare
Editor



Sorry to get all serious with you, but what I really love about Captain America has nothing to do at all with his red pirate boots, flying motorbike or his occasional ability to transform into a werewolf (Google 'CapWolf').

No, what I like about Captain America is that Steve Rogers, the working class weakling who stepped up to the plate in humanity's darkest hour, doesn't represent the powers of a god, a dead alien race or superhuman intellect; just the ordinary – and therefore extraordinary – courage, compassion and honest-to-goodness stones of an entire generation spread across all corners of the world.

Millions underwent Rogers' journey during World War II; whether they were conscripts or volunteers, they were forced to bury their insecurities and fears, pull on a uniform, stare down the evil-doers and say "Enough's enough."

Creators Joe Simon and Jack Kirby said "Enough's enough" when they clocked out Hitler on the cover of *Captain America Comics* #1, at a time when much of the US was opposed to intervention in 'Europe's war', and Kirby said "Enough's enough" when he went to fight in Europe in 1943.

Those values; those beliefs in a set of absolutes – good, evil, justice and injustice – and the trauma and self-doubt that lay waiting in their shadow seem so alien to us now. They're a source of amazement and awe, and when Captain America stands up to tyrants and supervillains, mad mutants and power-crazed demi-gods, he's not showing us something that exists only in the world of comic-books; he's showing us a glimpse of a world that most of us were fortunate to never be a part of – a world where ordinary people did both incredible and terrible things.

"You did this sort of thing without asking questions," recalled Kirby in 1992 of his war years. "It was your duty."

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MEET THE TEAM

Q. What genre/sub-genre would you like to see Marvel tackle next?



James Hoare Editor
A. Eighties adventure
A *Goonies*-style space romp with teen Nova Sam Alexander.



Jodie Tyley Deputy Editor
A. Romantic comedy
Starring She-Hulk. It's tough being a woman and a superhero attorney in the big city...



Jonathan Hatfull Staff Writer
A. Existential thriller
Who is really the Punisher – the character or the audience?



Steve Wright Sub Editor
A. Horror
An alternative universe *Marvel Zombies*-esque tale would be a lot of fun.

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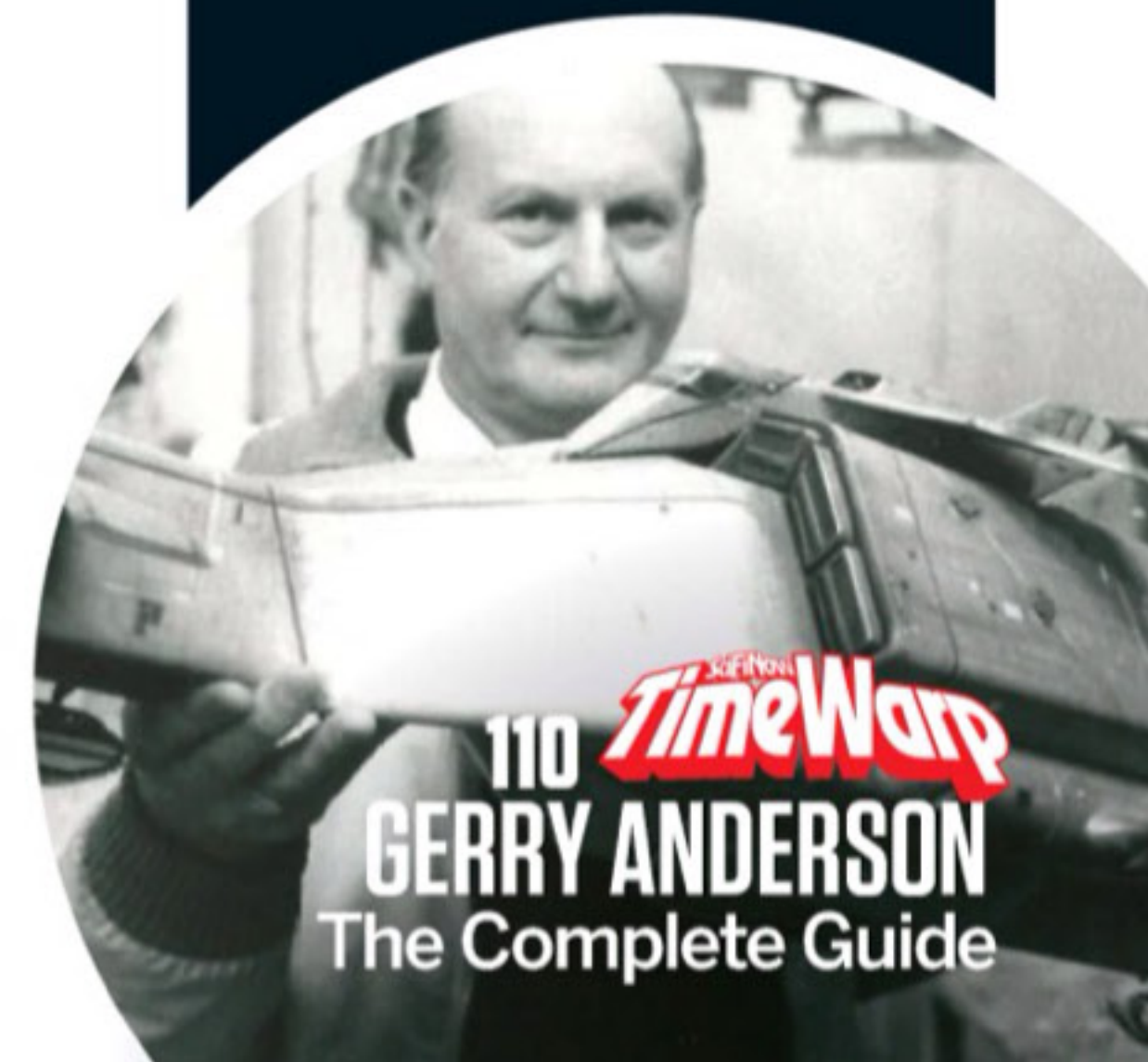
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GERRY ANDERSON
The Complete Guide

SciFiNow THE HOTTEST **NEWS** FIRST

PORTAL

Your essential,
trustworthy and
unrivalled guide
to the latest genre
happenings

NEWS



HAIL CAESAR!

The planet is on the brink of ape armageddon, as director Matt Reeves
and star of the simians Andy Serkis reveal... WORDS JODIE TYLEY INTERVIEW STEVE NASH

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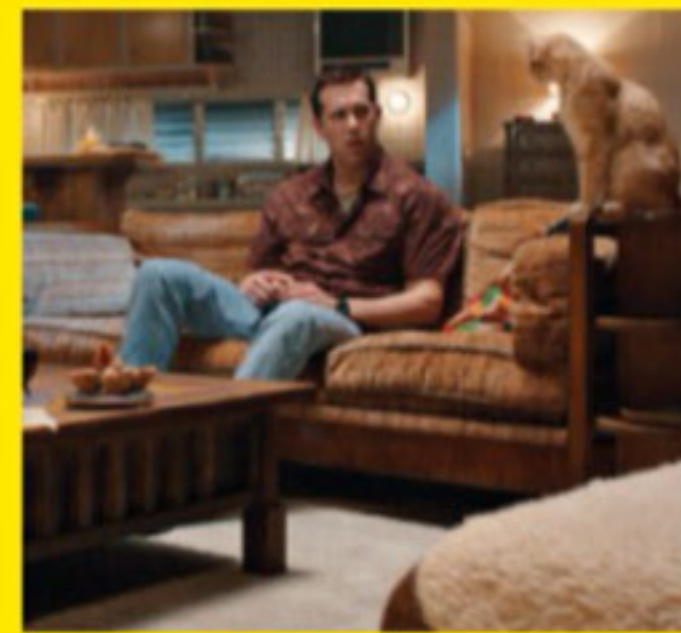
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What the first look at Peter Capaldi's 12th Doctor says about next series

016 THE VOICES



Exclusive first word on Ryan Reynolds' oddest genre role yet



Jason Clarke, Keri Russell and Gary Oldman star alongside Andy Serkis in *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes*.

Forget bird and swine flu; it's those damn dirty apes you've got to worry about. Only one in ten people survive simian flu, but the primates are positively thriving. They've established their own kingdom in the woods and Caesar is well on his way to being crowned king of the swingers, according to Andy Serkis: "[*Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes*] is very much about having Caesar become a leader and not throwing away everything that he has grown up with as a human being," he explains. "He's finding his inner ape by galvanising this 2,000-strong group of orangutans and chimps and gorillas, but also trying to be open and empathetic."

Helping to keep Caesar grounded is his new family. Following the aftermath of the ape experiments, he hooked up with fellow former captive Cornelia (played by Judy Greer), and together they have a teenage son named River (Nick Thurston) and an infant. "He also has a council and a very big community that he's responsible for," adds Serkis. "And then he has the choice of reaction to human beings, that he adores in a sense and still deep down wants to be able to communicate with them."

When the primates inevitably come face-to-face with the humans they believed had been wiped out, it becomes a battle for survival. "The whole story is about whether these two populations can co-exist," says director Matt Reeves (*Cloverfield*). "I don't think it's really a post-apocalyptic movie. That's what it looks like in the city, but it's much more about the nature of these two populations and whether or not they can find their way to live together."

Leading the human resistance is Malcolm, played by Jason Clarke, who is basically a (mostly) hairless version of Caesar. "Malcolm has a son, he lost his wife and he now has a new partner and he's trying to find a way through his family to stay alive," reveals the *Zero Dark*

Thirty star. "In a funny way he finds his inner ape as well. Through the ten years that we've had this apocalypse and this virus, he's lost a lot and gains a lot back through his interactions in the woods."

Incidentally, it hasn't escaped Clarke that his character will be compared to that of astronaut George Taylor in the 1968 original. "You've got to get rid of that, 'Am I Charlton Heston?' thing," he says. "As a kid I was very disturbed by it, but you watch the film again and go, 'I really like this and I want to be a part of this.' It's a nice feeling." Starring alongside Clarke are Gary Oldman and Keri Russell as fellow human survivors, but fighting against the knuckle-draggers seems futile, as Reeves points out: "It's not called *The Planet*

Of The Humans And The Apes."

As far as the actual title goes, this instalment marks the beginning of an ape-only civilisation, and part of that transition is watching them master the English language, something that makes the movie as much

"YOU'VE GOT TO GET RID OF THAT, 'AM I CHARLTON HESTON?' THING"

JASON CLARKE

of a horror as it is a science fiction epic. "Caesar's beginning to use human words," says Serkis, "and all of the other apes are dealing with gestures and vocalisations. Of course, the younger apes are growing up in this society and learning to speak better and faster than their parents, because that's what happens. So it's a very rich and complex world that Caesar exists in, and he's hugely under pressure as the movie goes on."

"When Andy says, 'No!' in *Rise*, I think it's so startling it blew me away," admits Reeves. "We wanted this to be somewhere along the continuum toward the '68 movie, where of course they're fully conversive, and so that's really what it's about." The director will be able to realise this dystopia, as he has recently signed on to direct the third instalment that's inching closer to an all-ape world.

Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes will be released on 17 July.

FRIGHT NIGHTS

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY COULD "GO ANYWHERE"

Writer Christopher Landon on where the horror juggernaut goes next WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

Found-footage horror franchise

Paranormal Activity shows no sign of slowing down, having recently changed direction with *The Marked Ones*, a 'cousin' film set in a Latino community. The film approached the series' mythology from a new angle while keeping a sneaky eye on the central character of Katie. Writer/director Christopher Landon has been a part of the series since the second film, and tells us that the possibilities are endless.

"One of the things we set up in the movie is that this is something that's happening on a global scale," he enthuses. "And so I think that there's certainly the opportunity for the franchise to go anywhere and to explore any culture we want, because we're kind of keying up the idea that the coven is

everywhere. I think it would be interesting to try and explore some other places, but we'll have to see what Paramount wants to do."

Although *The Marked Ones* had the smallest opening of any *Paranormal Activity* film, it made more than \$30 million from a \$5 million budget in its opening weekend. "One thing I know for certain is when the first *Paranormal Activity* came out, everyone felt like 'Oh, this is a one-off,'" reveals Landon. "The fact that we've been able to turn it into a five-movie franchise, and also the fact that we've been able to do things to make each movie different in its own way, I think this is the part that we take the most pride in."

Paranormal Activity: The Marked Ones is out now.



Could *The Marked Ones* signal a new beginning for the franchise?

ALIEN AUTOPSY DISSECTING THE FIRST LOOK AT PETER CAPALDI'S NEW DOCTOR

NEW DIRECTION

As the Doctor points to a new horizon, Capaldi released a brief but charming statement to commemorate his first day: "New job, first day, slightly nervous. Just like the Doctor, I'm emerging from the TARDIS into a whole other world."

BIG SMILES

With the casting of a veteran like Capaldi, there was a feeling among some viewers that *Doctor Who* would take a dour tone. While taking too much from the cheery look of this first on-set still, we think it's safe to assume that the show will stay away from too much darkness, even with *Kill List* director Ben Wheatley at the helm.

PUT A BOW ON IT

While the Doctor's bow-tie disappeared during the regeneration, it has stuck around in some form, namely Clara's jumper. We won't be referring to bow-ties as anything other than 'cool' for a while yet, and it remains to be seen whether Capaldi's Time Lord will continue the Doctor's predilection for natty head gear.

DRESSED FOR THE OCCASION

Capaldi's Doctor is still clad in the purple tweed of Matt Smith's dearly departed Time Lord, so we can assume that the first episode picks up exactly where the Christmas Special left off. Has the Doctor got used to the colour of his kidneys? Only time will tell.

FIVE THINGS WITH ZACHARY QUINTO

The *Star Trek* star on producing horror and defying expectations

INTERVIEW JONATHAN HATFULL

1 Keeping it real

Quinto's production company Before The Door has delivered *The Banshee Chapter*, a found-footage movie that blends Lovecraftian chills with real-life conspiracy theories. "I liked the historical context that this movie had," he tells us. "That's something I find interesting from a storytelling perspective, fictional stories set in some kind of a backdrop that has some element of truth to them. We're interested in innovative storytelling, and we felt like *The Banshee Chapter* had a lot of qualities of that."

2 Learn from the best

When the time came for Quinto to start producing films, he'd already worked with two of the best producers in town: JJ Abrams and *American Horror Story*'s Ryan Murphy. "JJ's such a great person to learn from," he enthuses. "Because he's so prolific, so talented, and he creates an environment in which people are inspired to do their best work and participate in the process. He surrounds himself with people he trusts and whose opinions he respects. Ryan's very similar in that way. They're both such creative storytellers and bold and fearless on so many levels that I took a lot from my experience with both of those guys."

3 Other side of the desk

One of Quinto's roles as a producer was casting. As an actor himself, he explains that being on the other side of the auditioning process wasn't any easier. "I find it rewarding on some levels and really demoralising on others," he explains. "Hearing how actors are spoken of and the way actors are assigned a value is really challenging on some levels. It can be both exciting and challenging, because there are a lot of factors that go into deciding what actors are able to play roles in different projects."

4 Psycho killer

Quinto delivered two stunning performances in *American Horror Story*, both as the ghost of Chad Warwick in *Murder House* and serial killer Oliver Thredson in *Asylum*. "[Ryan Murphy] created a world that was so specific and so unique. The idea of creating a repertory company of actors allowed me to create two such different characters, both of which were really interesting but existed on very different ends of the spectrum. I was thrilled for that opportunity. Anything's possible once you get into that world, and that's really exciting."

5 Life after Trek

After playing the potentially career-defining roles of *Heroes*' Sylar and *Star Trek*'s Spock, Quinto refuses to be pinned down. "It's great to have such wide exposure," he tells us, "but to build the kind of career that I want to look back on, that requires a little bit of reverse engineering, and I need to make the more character-driven, smaller movies that I think will define my ability as an actor. I'm less inclined to re-tread territory at this point, and I'm looking to surprise even myself in the creative stuff that I do next."



The Banshee Chapter is available on DVD now.



UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

We introduce the stars of *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, Marvel's riskiest superhero movie yet

The Infinity Stones (known to comic fans as the Infinity Gems) have been introduced into the Marvel Cinematic Universe in preparation for *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, but can anything prepare the masses for the rag-tag peacekeeping force that includes a tree and a talking raccoon? The latest synopsis gives away a major plot point: that this intergalactic adventure will orbit another gem, like the ones in *Thor: The Dark World* and *Avengers Assemble*. According to Marvel: "Peter Quill finds himself the object of an unrelenting

bounty hunt after stealing a mysterious orb coveted by Ronan, a powerful villain with ambitions that threaten the entire universe." Peter, also known as Star-Lord, will form an uneasy alliance with the group of misfits. The fate of the galaxy hangs in the balance, as does Marvel's reputation for producing crowd-pleasing, box-office-breaking blockbusters in what will be their biggest test to date.

Guardians Of The Galaxy will be released on 1 August.

GAMORA

ALIAS: MOST DANGEROUS WOMAN IN THE UNIVERSE

ABILITIES: SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH, SPEED AND AGILITY WITH REGENERATIVE HEALING POWERS



Bio: When the race of Zen-Whoberis was wiped out, Gamora was rescued by the 'Mad Titan' Thanos. He raised her to become the ultimate assassin, trained in multiple martial arts disciplines and upgraded with bionic implants and accelerated healing – and she has green skin. "She turns green when she blushes, she turns green when she's mad, and she turns green when she's turned on," says actress Zoe Saldana. "She has grown up in an environment that has misrepresented how she feels inside, and she's going to discover that, hopefully."

ROCKET RACCOON

ALIAS: ROCKET RACCOON, RANGER ROCKET

ABILITIES: ENHANCED SIGHT AND SMELL, AND AN EXPERT IN WEAPONRY

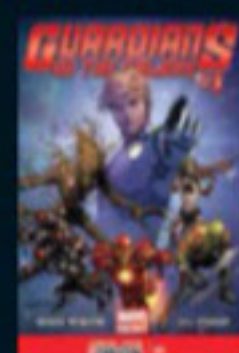


Bio: No one really talks about Rocket's bizarre beginnings anymore, and for good reason. The story goes that he was from planet Halfworld, where alien humanoids had built a complex to house the insane and created robots to take care of the patients. When a star went nova, the radiation caused the robots to become sentient, and it was they who used genetic engineering to give intelligence to the animals. And Rocket Raccoon used to date an otter and his friend was called Wal Rus. These days, Rocket is a key member of the Guardians, as a supreme strategist and gun-toting badass, and is set to become the breakout star of the movie.

PETER QUILL

ALIAS: STAR-LORD

ABILITIES: PEAK HUMAN STRENGTH AND STAMINA, ALONG WITH A LIFESPAN THREE TIMES LONGER THAN HUMANS FROM EARTH



Bio: If Steven Spielberg had stumbled across Star-Lord's back story in the Eighties, he might have been tempted to turn it into a movie. According to Peter Quill's recently revamped origin, he was the son of an alien prince and a human mother, who was killed by aliens called the Badoon. Peter discovers his heritage when he stumbles upon his father's element gun, along with a desire to travel through space and protect Earth from the Badoon. But according to actor Chris Pratt, the lack of gravity has gone to his head: "He's been able to be free in space and do whatever he's wanted to do. That's really fun, because it means he's slept with all these super-weird aliens."



THREE'S A CROWD?



INSIDIOUS 3 "DEPENDS ON JAMES WAN"

INTERVIEW JAMES HOARE

Barbara Hershey says prospects are grim for the horror

Insidious: Chapter 3 may have been rushed into production following the impressive box office takings of the first two retro-tinged supernatural chillers, but with director James Wan (*Saw*, *The Conjuring*) announcing his retirement from horror and setting the tone for his new career path with *Fast & Furious 7*, the odds of recapturing the original spirit seem slimmer.

"I can't say," muses Barbara Hershey, who played Lorraine Lambert in both films. "It depends on a lot of factors – it would depend on the script, whether James is doing it, as he's currently done with genre."

Wan and frequent writing partner Leigh Whannell (who also plays slapstick paranormal investigator Specs in both films) will be a hard act to follow, having turned both *Insidious* and *Saw* into unstoppable horror brands. "They're very open," recalls Hershey. "With Leigh I was very aware that I was saying his lines, and it must be strange for an actor to hear other

actors saying his lines. He was very loose. It was nice, if you came up with a problem he was here to help you. James was wonderful, of course, very jovial – always laughing."

Hershey has only one sequel on her impressive CV: *Insidious: Chapter 2*, and admits she has a high bar when it comes to quality. "I've never been offered one before *Insidious*," she admits. "I'm trying to think whether there's been an opportunity for a sequel – I don't think there was. As an audience member I look at them warily – you have to have a reason to do the film other than they want to use the name."

"That was one of the good things about this [last film], it picked up where the other left off... it wasn't a thing someone invented; it was a continuation within minutes of the other one."

Insidious: Chapter 2 is out now on DVD and Blu-ray.



ARTHUR SAMPSON DOUGLAS

ALIAS: DRAX THE DESTROYER

ABILITIES: STRENGTH AND SKILL IN COMBAT, WITH THE POWER TO SHOOT COSMIC ENERGY BLASTS AND DETECT THANOS' WHEREABOUTS



Bio: Wrestler turned actor Dave Bautista sums Drax up best as "a pretty bad dude" who's bursting with "rage and honour" and muscles. In his former life he was a saxophonist called Arthur who was killed, along with his family, by the infamous Thanos. His soul was then resurrected by Thanos' grandfather Kronos, and used to create the superhuman warrior known as Drax the Destroyer, whose sole purpose in afterlife was to defeat Thanos. But that doesn't mean he won't provide a few laughs, adds Bautista: "He's very literal. I think the best thing about Drax is that he's hysterical without meaning to be."

"I NEVER KNEW SOMEONE COULD SAY 'I AM GROOT' SO MANY WAYS AND WITH SUCH FEELING"

JAMES GUNN



GROOT

ALIAS: NONE

ABILITIES: CAN RE-GROW LIMBS AND CALL OTHER PLANT LIFE INTO BATTLE



Bio: Groot is an extraterrestrial tree of few words, and it seems like the big hunk of bark is going to be continuing this tradition in the movie. He will be voiced by Vin Diesel, and director James Gunn is impressed with his performance, saying: "I never knew someone could say 'I am Groot' so many different ways and with such feeling (and that sounds like I'm kidding, but I'm not!)." In the comics Groot has laid his life on the line for the Guardians, but his ability to be re-grown keeps him coming back for more epic space battles.



SAM WITWER

77
TOTAL GEEK
RATING

GEEK CRED

⚙️ Sam Witwer plays Aidan Waite in the US version of *Being Human*, and has featured in *The Clone Wars* and *The Force Unleashed*, voicing pivotal roles like Darth Maul. Incidentally, the Sith Lord's storyline will conclude in comic form this May. "George [Lucas] really liked the character, and wanted to keep him around for a long time," he says. "It's a thrill to have been part of the Lucas era." A role in new TV series *Rebels* might also be on the cards, as Witwer adds: "It's always possible!"

14/20

GEEK KNOWLEDGE

⚙️ Given his involvement with the *Star Wars* Expanded Universe, Witwer has an invested interest in the decision by Lucasfilm to drop George Lucas' canon hierarchy in favour of a single, cohesive continuity. "If they can pull it off it will be worth it," said Witwer, "otherwise they're going to piss off a lot of people... look at the *Star Trek* fans – they got nothing! The Expanded Universe pre-*Star Trek: Next Generation* was thrown out! At least we have some cohesion."

15/20

COMMITMENT

⚙️ Playing a vamp isn't all neck nuzzling: "My arms were all torn up, and my eyelashes on one side had to be trimmed because I got burned. I've been thrown around, slammed through walls, and had five stunt guys kicking me at once. To put it mildly, it's not the years, honey; it's the mileage." The role's challenges aren't purely physical, though, as he reunites with his apparently long-dead wife. "She's a different woman," he reveals, "and it complicates everything."

18/20

FAN POWER

⚙️ 19 fans created a custom replica of Starkiller's lightsaber, who Witwer voiced in the *The Force Unleashed*. "It was weathered, you could attach blades and it changed colours," he marvels. "You're talking thousands of dollars, and these people chipped in and made this project happen." He's encountered people from all corners of SF fandom, from *Battlestar Galactica* to *Smallville*, but *Star Wars* supporters stand out. "I'm one of them, so I'm probably biased!"

19/20

NEXT MOVE

⚙️ When *Being Human* returns, expect a different Aidan. "Aidan has been living with these yahoos for four years, and they've definitely rubbed off on him," he reveals. "He's opening up a lot more, which makes him funnier." Fans will also discover what's kept the 200-year-old vamp from staking his own life, especially since he often laments his immortality. "We wanted to put him more at danger," Witwer continues. "The greatest threat being himself. He's funnier and more dangerous."

11/20

SCIFINOW RESPONDS

THE WALKING DEAD

SPOILER ALERT!

Post-prison episodes "really harkens back to the first season"

It has been four years since the zombie apocalypse ravaged our screens, and the Atlanta survivors have come a long way, but the second half of Season Four will send them straight back to square one. "I feel like Episode Nine and onward really harkens back to the first season," director and make-up effects maestro Greg Nicotero tells *Channel Guide Magazine*. "This is the first time that they're out in the world again. It's the first time we really get that sense of how big the world is and how unprotected people are in the wilderness."

The mid-season finale destroyed their safe haven when the Governor (David Morrissey) proved there's no safety behind bars. It left the group scattered, and Rick (Andrew Lincoln) and Carl (Chandler Riggs) are the most vulnerable, without a vehicle or supplies. They also believe baby Judith died in the crossfire when they discovered her empty bloody car seat.

This mystery – along with the Sanctuary message on the radio, the secret rat disector and the inevitable reappearance of Carol (Melissa McBride) – will be explored. "Every single moment is there for a reason," Nicotero continues. "Stuff we shot in the first episode this year pays off later, and it's like each character has a beginning, a middle and an end. It's really satisfying. [Showrunner] Scott Gimple knows what's going to happen in Season Five already."

The Walking Dead Season Four is airing on Mondays on FOX.

**MAN OF STEEL 2'S WONDER WOMAN IS TOO SKINNY?**WORDS
JAMES HOARE**When Gal Gadot was confirmed as Wonder Woman in *Batman Vs Superman*, the knives came out. We refute the key argument against her casting...****"Gal Gadot just doesn't look like Wonder Woman"**

If you mean she doesn't look exactly how she does in the comics, then no, she doesn't. A *Wonder Woman* comic is a two-dimensional representation, and that changes depending on who's drawing or what the prevailing trends in comics and art are at the time.

"She's not the right shape for Wonder Woman"

How she looks now isn't entirely reflective of how she'll look on screen; she might bulk up, she might dye her hair, they might add a third arm in post-production. Gadot's also a former sports trainer, and as an Israeli citizen she spent two years in the Israeli army. She's more than capable of putting together the athletic physique we expect from someone trained from birth by the warrior women of Themyscira.

"Her boobs are too small"

The actress recently addressed the boob backlash on the Israeli TV show *Good Evening With Gai Pines*: "I represent the Wonder Women of the new world. Breasts... anyone can buy for 9,000 shekels."

"She isn't a good enough actress"

We've only got *Fast & Furious* to go on, and that's not exactly rich with opportunities for a thespian to show off their range. What was it about Henry Cavill's Renaissance rutting in *The Tudors* that made him the best person to play Superman? *Man Of Steel*, for all its faults, was well cast, and Ben Affleck is a perfectly reasonable choice for Batman. So why doesn't this track record deserve the benefit of the doubt?

"She could ruin it so there'll be no standalone *Wonder Woman* film"

The people who'll determine whether or not we get that solo *Wonder Woman* film are *Batman Vs Superman* writer David S Goyer and director Zack Snyder. If we don't get a solo movie then that'll be pretty crappy, but it defies the odds that the character is even making an appearance after David E Kelley's pilot was laughed out of contention and Joss Whedon's film pitch was rejected.

"Gal Gadot just isn't Wonder Woman"

No, she isn't. Nobody is; Wonder Woman is a fictional character.



Gadot in 2009's *Fast & Furious*, out now on DVD and Blu-ray.

'PARTLY AN INTRIGUING SCI-FI STORY...PARTLY AN INDULGENT SECOND-CHILDHOOD ROMP. WHO CAN'T FIND THE FUN IN THAT?'

DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE

DOCTOR
WHOBBC
BOOKS

FEELING BLUE

IT'S CASTIN' TIME!

Who's rumoured for Josh Trank's *Fantastic Four* reboot?

WORDS JAMES HOARE



KIT HARINGTON
GAME OF THRONES



RICHARD MADDEN
GAME OF THRONES



MR FANTASTIC
Aka Reed Richards
Emotionally aloof stretchy super-genius



MILES TELLER
DIVERGENT



THE HUMAN TORCH
Aka Johnny Storm
Literal and figurative hot-head



MICHAEL B JORDAN
CHRONICLE



SAOIRSE RONAN
BYZANTIUM



KATE MARA
AMERICAN HORROR STORY



THE INVISIBLE WOMAN
Aka Sue Storm
Disappearing act and moral centre



THE THING
Aka Ben Grimm
Rock skin and clobbering fists



TERRY CREWS
THE EXPENDABLES

WHAT ELSE DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE FANTASTIC FOUR?

1 Shooting will begin in March in Louisiana with *Chronicle*'s Josh Trank as director.

2 The script has been rewritten by *Days Of Future Past*'s Simon Kinberg, with closer links to 20th Century Fox's X-Men movies expected.

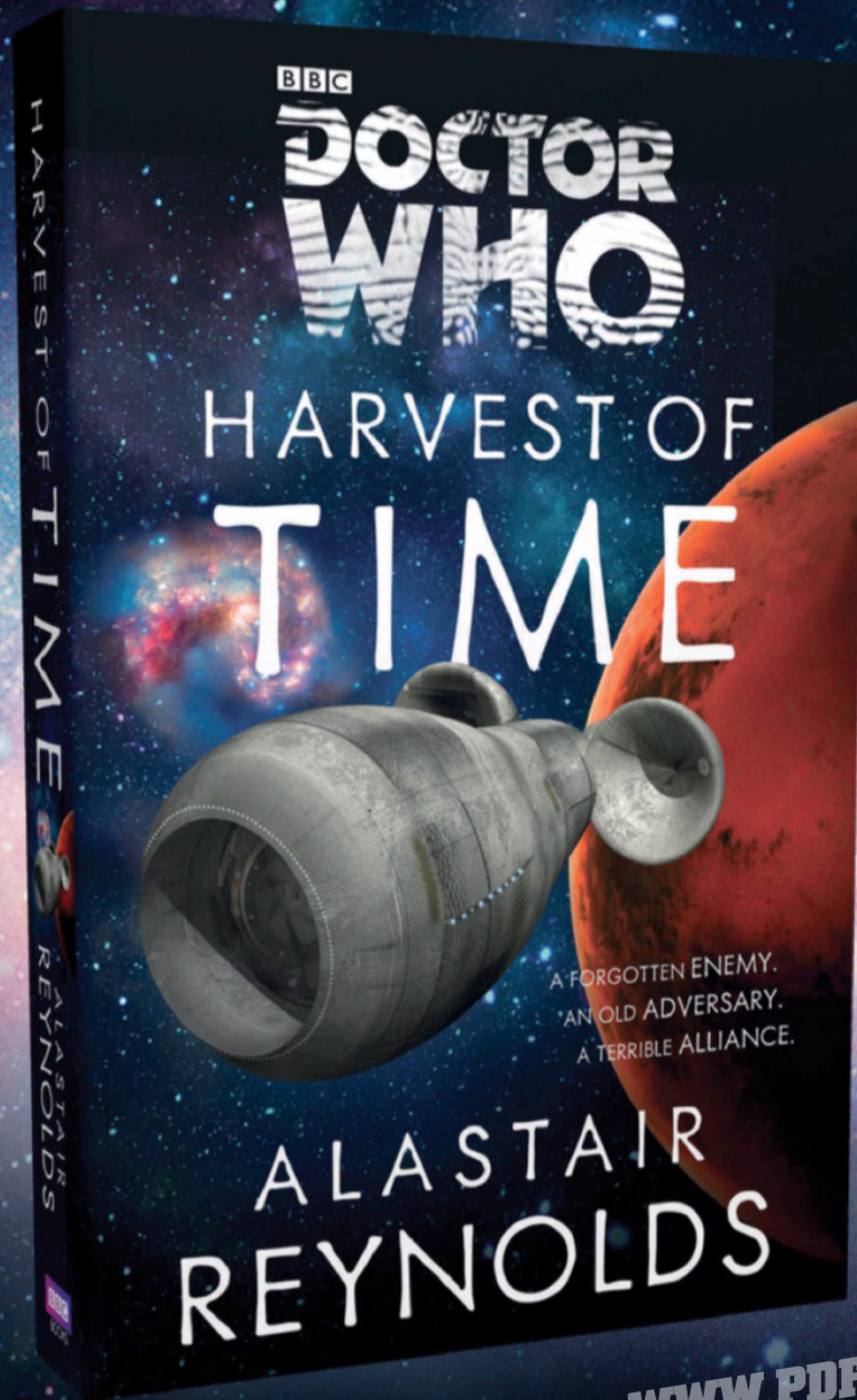
3 *X-Men: First Class* director Matthew Vaughn is producing, underlining the X-Men connection again. The result of which is...

4 ...a rumoured X-Men Vs *Fantastic Four* film, based on the 1987 comic of the same name. A phrase that's cropping up is "Avengers-style."



Fantastic Four is due in cinemas 6 March 2015.

A FORGOTTEN ENEMY.
AN OLD ADVERSARY.
A TERRIBLE ALLIANCE.



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3 HOBBIT VS THE LORD OF THE RINGS
tinyurl.com/pz8zsc7



4 TRON 3 EXCLUSIVE
tinyurl.com/pw6yvve



5 ONCE UPON A TIME IN PERIL
tinyurl.com/p9kscca

RYAN REYNOLDS HEARS THE VOICES

"It's Doctor Dolittle meets American Psycho," says producer
INTERVIEW JAMES HOARE

Actor Ryan Reynolds is taking a breather from the disappointing action movies he's starred in lately, *Green Lantern* and *RIPD* included. In the new indie comedy/horror *The Voices*, Reynolds plays disturbed bathtub factory worker and accidental murderer Jerry Hickfang, who can hear his pets' voices – the evil potty-mouthed puss Mr Whiskers and his benevolent hound Bosco.

"The best way I can describe it is *Doctor Dolittle* meets *American Psycho* – yep, you heard that right," says producer Adi Shankar. "You're peering into the mind of the serial killer. It was one of the best scripts I've read in a very long time, and stuck with me days after I'd read it. I thought, 'I need to bring this to life, this is so cool.' It's one of those films that has a point of view, and Ryan Reynolds is great in it."

Starring alongside Reynolds is Gemma Arterton (*Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters*)

and Anna Kendrick (*Scott Pilgrim Vs The World*), and it's likely that one of these not-so-lucky ladies will wind up as his doomed love interest. When their relationship takes a turn for the murderous, his pets lead him down the path to salvation. It's guaranteed that this is one of the stranger movie plots that you will read this year, and that's saying something in a sci-fi, fantasy and horror magazine. The unusual premise was actually penned by Michael R Perry, the mastermind behind *Paranormal Activity 2* and underrated horror series *The River*.

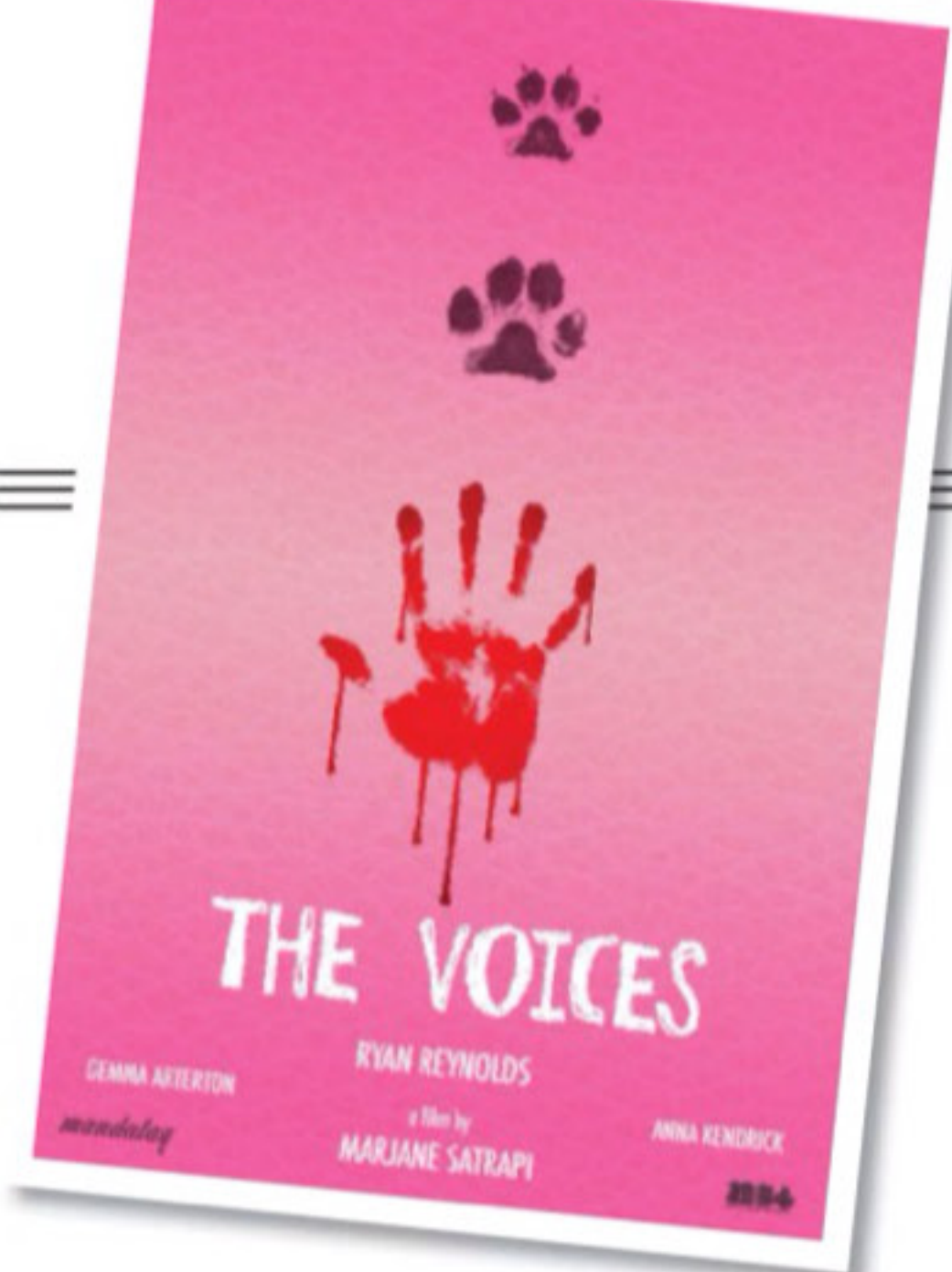
This horror-comedy is not only a wild card choice for the movie's star, but also for Shankar, who has previously produced the hyper-violent *Dredd* and Liam Neeson-starrer *The Grey*. "It is not the most obvious project," he admits. "It's directed by Marjane Satrapi, who did *Persepolis* and *Chicken With Plums*, and she also wrote

Persepolis the comic-book, or graphic novel. I've been a huge fan of hers for years, and I got to finally work with her on this movie."

Satrapi's involvement will ensure that *The Voices* will take a more idiosyncratic look at what is usually child-friendly fare, as Shankar adds: "[Marjane Satrapi is] what makes the movie so interesting," adds Shankar. "It still feels very much like a Marjane movie in that it's got that whimsical quality; it's got that sly humour sprinkled throughout. It's that duality that makes the movie so interesting. There's a very down the middle way to do the script, and I think Marjane completely elevates it and explores corners of the concept that would have been normally glossed over."

It sounds like the voices in Ryan Reynolds's head are on the money this time.

The Voices will premiere at this year's Sundance Film Festival.

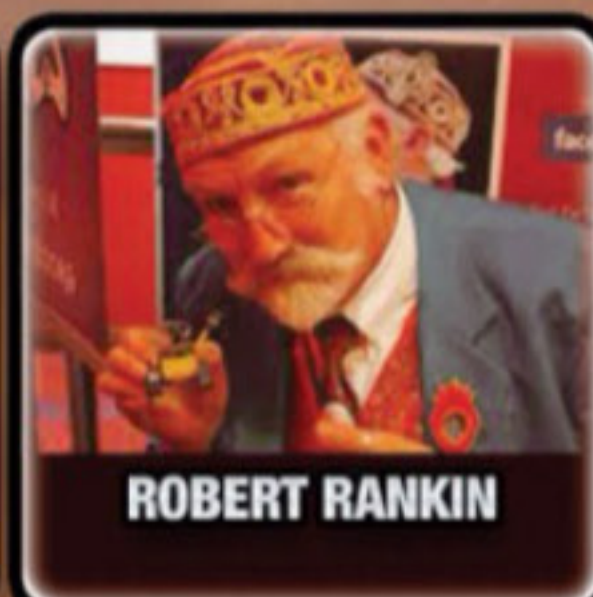
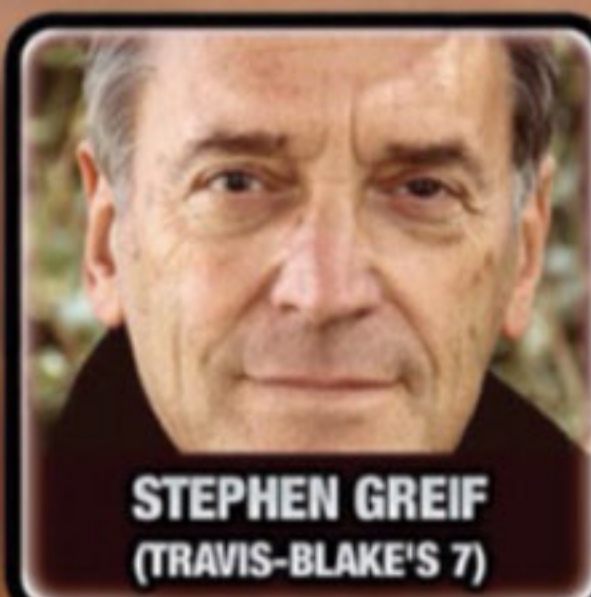


Ryan Reynolds stars in pet-themed horror *The Voices*.

IT WAS ONE OF THE BEST SCRIPTS I'VE READ IN A LONG TIME, AND STUCK WITH ME
ADI SHANKAR



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FREQUENTLY OVER-USED
IN THIS DAY AND AGE,
YET, IN THIS CASE, IT IS
ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE"**

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BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION
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COVER STORY

Captain America: The Winter Soldier





DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THE PRESS SAYS. DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THE POLITICIANS OR THE MOBS SAY. DOESN'T MATTER IF THE WHOLE COUNTRY DECIDES THAT SOMETHING WRONG IS SOMETHING RIGHT. THIS NATION WAS FOUNDED ON ONE PRINCIPLE ABOVE ALL ELSE: THE REQUIREMENT THAT WE STAND UP FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE, NO MATTER THE ODDS OR THE CONSEQUENCES. WHEN THE MOB AND THE PRESS AND THE WHOLE WORLD TELL YOU TO MOVE, YOUR JOB IS TO PLANT YOURSELF LIKE A TREE BESIDE THE RIVER OF TRUTH, AND TELL THE WHOLE WORLD...

NO, YOU MOVE.

FROM AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #537 (FEB 2007) BY J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI



WORDS JODIE TYLEY INTERVIEW JAMES HOARE

THE WORLD'S SHIFTIEST ESPIONAGE ORGANISATION STRUCK GOLD WHEN THEY FOUND THE FROZEN BODY OF THE ONLY SUPERHERO IN THE MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE WHO FOLLOWS ORDERS. BUT THE BUBBLE IS ABOUT TO BURST.

In *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, it's clear that SHIELD's motivations are going to be at war with Steve Rogers' (Chris Evans) unflinching moral compass. He thinks he's rejoined the fight to protect our freedom, but it soon dawns on him that fear is the only product. Events will force him to question

whether his chain of command really deserves respect, coming to verbal blows with Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) and Alexander Pierce (Robert Redford), a high-ranking SHIELD officer who's not afraid to "build a new world by tearing the old one down."

This isn't the first time Cap has been let down by shady authority figures. In the classic conspiracy arc of Steve Englehart's Seventies *Captain America* And *The Falcon* storyline 'Secret Empire', the man out of

time became a man without a country. It reflected the national disillusionment of the era, and brought renewed relevance to the flag-clad hero, who was rapidly falling out of favour. Paranoia and mistrust continued in Ed Brubaker and Steve Epting's seminal 'Winter Soldier' run, which has heavily inspired this movie beyond merely the title.

"Marvel had it in their heads that they really wanted to make a political thriller, which we loved, because that's what makes Brubaker's run so brilliant," says ➤



COVER STORY

Captain America: The Winter Soldier

MOST TALKED ABOUT ON TWITTER

5,000+ TWEETS

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE SCREENTIME

12.44 MINS

BOX OFFICE BOOTY*

THE INCREDIBLE HULK (2009)
\$286,045,260

CAPTAIN AMERICA (2011)
\$383,778,814

AVENGERS DISASSEMBLE

Who's Earth's
Mightiest Hero?

(*WORLDWIDE IN DOLLARS,
ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION)

THOR: THE DARK WORLD (2013)
\$632,441,762

IRON MAN 3 (2013)
\$1,215,439,994

25.52 MINS

15,000+ TWEETS

15,000+ TWEETS

28.03 MINS

33.35 MINS

15,000+ TWEETS

CAPTAIN AMERICA

IRON MAN

THOR

BLACK WIDOW

HAWKEYE

THE HULK

BLACK
WIDOW +
HAWKEYE =
DISQUALIFIED





➤ Anthony Russo, who co-directed the star-spangled sequel with his brother, Joe. "For us as filmmakers, we think it's more satisfying when an audience goes to the theatre, they think they're seeing a superhero movie, but when they get to the end of it they're surprised with how much more content there is for them and thematically how much more interesting and challenging the movie is. That's what we're hoping to do."

Aside from reintroducing Cap to a darker world, Brubaker's arc also dared to bring back Steve Rogers' World War II comrade James 'Bucky' Buchanan as the villainous Winter Soldier. Before then, the sidekick was buried in the same literary graveyard as Peter Parker's Uncle Ben, seemingly untouchable, but his resurrection cleverly continued the emotional trauma Cap has been dealing with ever since he snapped out of suspended animation, decades after his plane hit the ice. Since the movie version of the character slept through the JFK assassination, Woodstock and Watergate, the moral dilemma will revolve around SHIELD.

"We're living in a very complicated time," continues Anthony. "Civil liberties are being called into question, drone technology is evolving, and we're using pre-emptive technology to kill people who are potential threats. There are a lot of complicated moral questions facing citizens of democratic countries, and Cap, as a scion of America, would be challenged by these issues."

"I LOVE ED BRUBAKER'S RUN AND I LOVE THE ULTIMATES, BECAUSE THEY BROUGHT A LITTLE BIT OF DIRT AND GRIT TO THE CHARACTER" ANTHONY RUSSO

THE UK TRAILER FOR THE WINTER SOLDIER REVEALED THAT THESE ARE THE COLD, UNCOMPROMISING TACTICS THAT SHIELD DEPLOYS – "NEUTRALISING THREATS BEFORE THEY EVEN HAPPEN" – AND IT DOESN'T SIT WELL WITH CAP. THAT'S SIMPLY NOT THE WORLD HE WENT OUT TO fight for in 1941. In fact, it's more like the one he went out to fight.

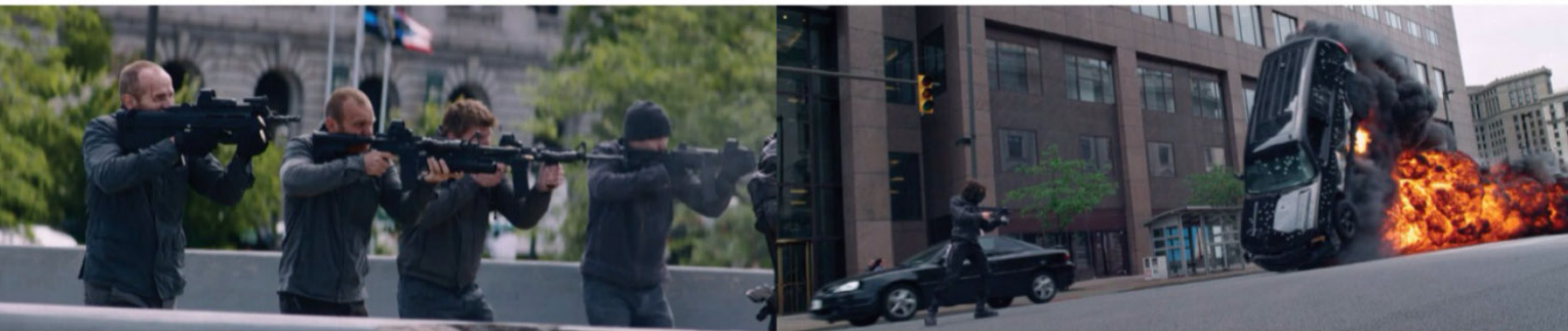
The super soldier's cast-iron ideals are the reason he's been paired with Scarlett Johansson's no-nonsense Natasha Romanoff, aka Black Widow. They may be products of the same system, but the street-smart siren has no illusions about what SHIELD is up to, and she's not above a few dirty tricks herself. Cap and Nat may share the soldier's bond – the metaphorical band of brothers – but morally they're different sides of the argument.

"They're a wonderful pairing for that reason – they're opposites," says Anthony. "Cap is very grounded in the truth; she's very fluid with the truth. Their personality types are so different, and what they stand for and believe in. To force these two together through ➤

Sebastian Stan reappears as assassin the Winter Soldier.



This time, Avengers accomplice Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson) will join the fray.





COVER STORY

Captain America: The Winter Soldier



Rest assured: there'll be plenty of good old-fashioned fisticuffs among the political intrigue.

➤ circumstances and make either of them trust or not trust one another is a fun dance to watch them do. Chris Evans and Scarlett Johansson have worked together several times, so they have a remarkable chemistry with one another. They're very intimate and knowing."

'Intimate' might be the key word, with rumours of a romance hounding the second movie. This would certainly put a fresh spin on the comic-book material, which has seen her hook up with Hawkeye, Daredevil and the Winter Soldier himself. But complicating matters of the heart is the hotly anticipated introduction of Agent 13, better known as Sharon Carter. In the comics, the pair share a passionate on-off relationship, but co-director Joe Russo says they're taking things slow for now.

"We introduce her as a *character* in this movie, but it's sort of a soft introduction. There's definitely the budding of [a romance], but it's something that's more left to future storytellers." Played by Emily VanCamp from TV's *Revenge*, Sharon is a relation of military pin-up Peggy Carter (Hayley Atwell), who was all set to become Steve's wartime sweetheart in the first film. In a deleted scene on the *Avengers Assemble* DVD and Blu-ray release, we learned that she is still alive – adding a whole new element to any future love triangle.

HIS LOST OPPORTUNITY FOR LOVE ISN'T THE ONLY THING HE'S MOURNING; THERE'S HIS DECEASED BARBERSHOP QUARTET AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, HIS BEST FRIEND BUCKY (SEBASTIAN STAN). IN CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE FIRST AVENGER, HE SEEMINGLY PERISHED

after falling from a moving train into an icy ravine. Just before that happens, though, the writers were already prepping for his return. When Cap comes to rescue his pal from the Red Skull and Nazi scientist Arnim Zola, he finds him strapped to a chair, having been tortured and probably subjected to all sorts of experiments. This is the more likely reason for his resurrection, as opposed to the comic-book storyline that saw the Soviets to blame for transforming him into a cyborg assassin. It won't be a happy reunion when the mask slips and Cap discovers he's been battling one of his closest allies, and herein lies the key to what makes Bucky the deadliest foe he's faced so far.

"We wanted to take a really grounded approach to the movie, and the Winter Soldier, even though he has a bionic arm, is in some ways a more grounded villain than the Red Skull is," says Anthony, which

CHRIS EVANS



Fantastic Four as Johnny Storm/Human Torch (2005, 2007)



TMNT as the voice of Casey Jones (2007)



Scott Pilgrim Vs The World as Lucas Lee (2010)



The Losers as Jensen (2010)



Captain America/ Avengers Assemble as Steve Rogers/Captain America (2011, 2014)

SERIAL SUPERHEROES

These actors have suited up for more than one comic-book movie for some big-screen heroics

NICOLAS CAGE



Ghost Rider as Johnny Blaze/Ghost Rider (2007, 2011)



Kick-Ass as Damon Macready/Big Daddy (2010)

AARON TAYLOR-JOHNSON



Kick-Ass as Dave Lizewski/Kick-Ass (2010, 2013)



The Avengers: Age Of Ultron as Pietro Maximoff/Quicksilver (2015)

BEN AFFLECK

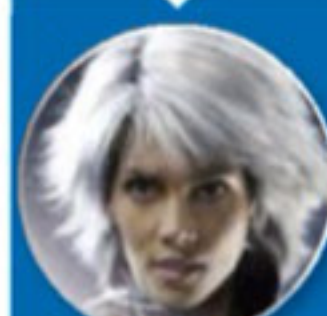


Daredevil as Matt Murdock/Daredevil (2003)



Batman Vs Superman as Bruce Wayne/Batman (2016)

HALLE BERRY



X-Men as Ororo Munroe/Storm (2000, 2003, 2006, 2014)



Catwoman as Patience Phillips (2004)

BRANDON ROUTH



Superman Returns as Clark Kent/Superman (2006)



Dylan Dog: Dead Of Night as Dylan Dog (2010)



Scott Pilgrim Vs The World as Todd Ingram (2010)

RYAN REYNOLDS



X-Men Origins: Wolverine as Wade Wilson/Deadpool (2009)



Green Lantern as Hal Jordan/Green Lantern (2011)



RIPD as Nick (2013)

JIM CARREY



The Mask as Stanley Ipkiss/The Mask (1994)

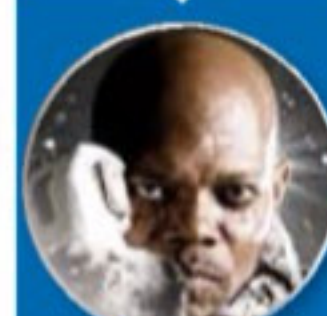


Batman Forever as Dr. Edward Nygma/Riddler (1995)



Kick-Ass 2 as Colonel Stars And Stripes (2013)

SAMUEL L JACKSON



The Spirit as Octopus (2008)



Assorted Marvel movies as Nick Fury (2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014)

RAY STEVENSON



Punisher: War Zone as Frank Castle (2008)



Thor as Volstagg (2011, 2013)



also explains why Bucky is one of the only baddies in the MCU with the skills to catch Cap's shield in mid-air.

"He's an enhanced human being like Cap, and their abilities match up against one another in a very similar way, which is what I think's brilliant about Brubaker's creation. We always say that a hero is only as good as the villain, and this villain in particular is a gift from a storytelling standpoint. He has such an emotional connection to the lead hero; they're basically brothers fighting each other, so you can't ask for a better or richer back story between a hero and a villain. For us, the relationship between Cap and the Winter Soldier is potentially more engaging than with Cap and the Red Skull."

Fighting in Cap's corner alongside Black Widow is his new ally, Sam Wilson (Anthony Mackie). He's a former military man working at the Veterans Association, counselling soldiers with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, but he also has a superhero alter ego of his own – the gravity-defying, winged Falcon.

"I think he starts to form a friendship with Falcon based on this sort of soldier code that he's not surrounded with anymore because he's working for SHIELD," explains Anthony. "The ethics and code of a spy agency are very different from the soldiering code he came from, and he gravitates towards Falcon, who has a similar background to him, so it's an interesting relationship."

In the movie, Wilson's counselling expertise enables him to deal with Cap's pent-up emotions, and in the process he becomes one of

the few people in this world that our hero can trust. "When Cap began his story, he lost everything," he continues. "Almost nobody has had that experience of losing every single person they know. He's 70 years down the road when he comes out of stasis, and Cap's finding that the world he left was really black and white, it was Allies versus the Nazis, and very clean in the sense of good versus bad. Then he goes away for 70 years – he misses Watergate, Vietnam and everything that's followed – so all of a sudden he comes face-to-face with a world that we've all been incrementally stepped to, the world that we know and interact with.

"Cap wasn't stepped to it; he was slammed into the modern world, and so he's going to have a stronger reaction to complexities that we're looking at than we are, because he's coming from a place that was much clearer and simpler. He's looking for grounding in the modern world in this movie, and he finds a common bond with Falcon because of his history as a soldier."

PTSD counselling is something that another of Earth's Mightiest Heroes could have benefitted from, as *Iron Man 3* saw Tony Stark losing his mettle and breaking down by the roadside. It was a clever way of acknowledging the cataclysmic events of New York while blithely ignoring the fact that the super-friends were no longer on standby to help bring down the Mandarin's terrorist plot. *Thor: The Dark World* managed to ➤

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

What Black Widow's hair and neckline reveal about the plot. Cut... and action!

BETTY BARMAID

Iron Man 2 (2010)

Posing as Tony Stark's new assistant, Natasha Romanoff's look was engineered to make her opponents underestimate her. The plunging neckline and tightly sprung hair was holding her back, turning this super-skilled agent into a mere object of desire.

Rating: ★★★★★

BOLD AND BOUNCY

Avengers Assemble (2012)

The catsuit was redesigned to balance style and functionality. The zip was pulled up too, which simultaneously upped her cred as a superhero, while the shorter brighter hair-do shows she's poised for adventure.

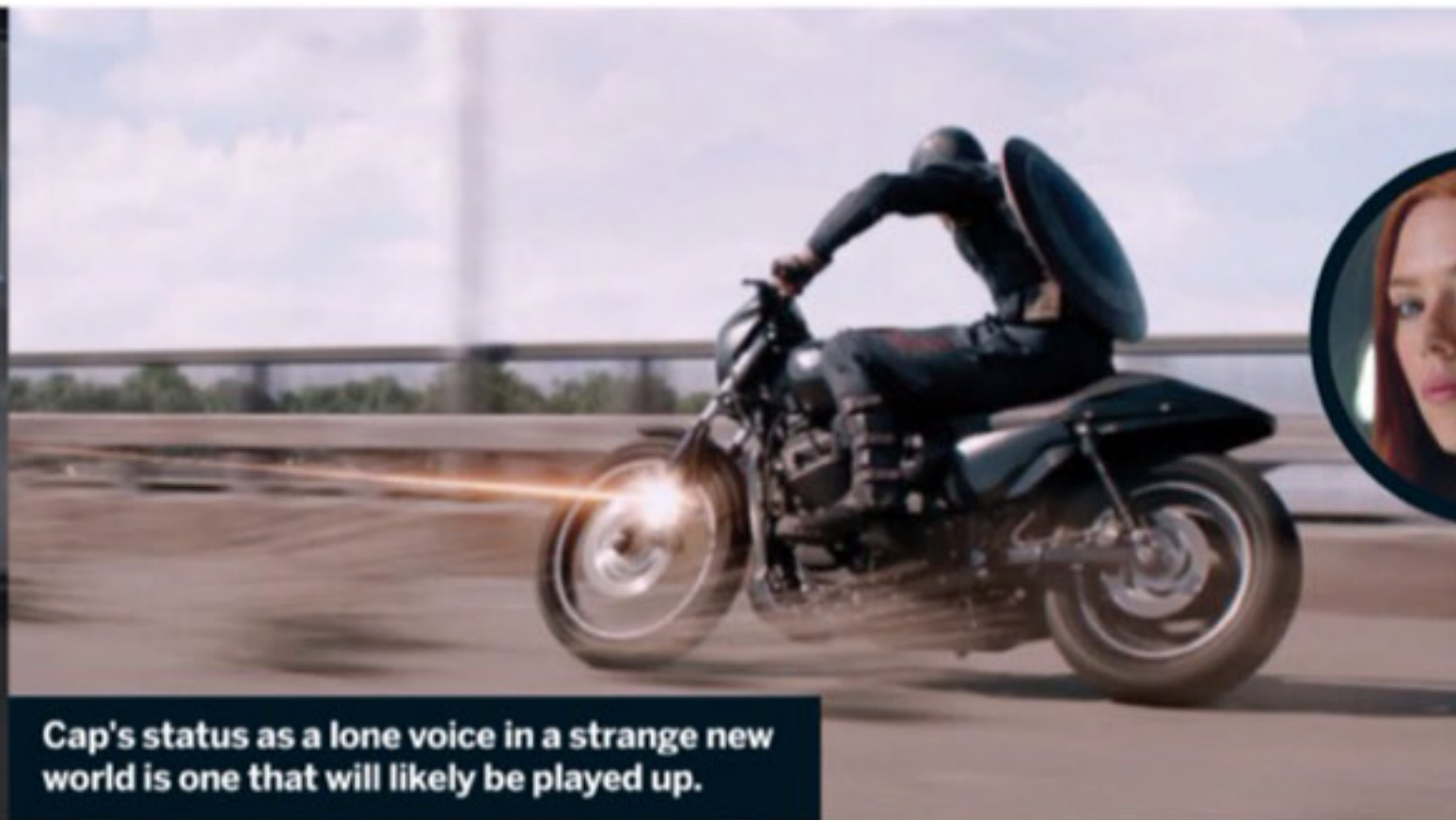
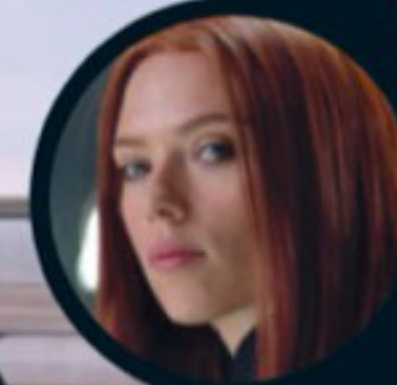
Rating: ★★★★★

SERIOUS BUSINESS

Captain America: The Winter Soldier (2014)

We can tell Black Widow is adopting Samuel L. Jackson levels of seriousness just by looking at her flat, lacklustre hairstyle. Let's face it, she'll never be the type to wear a polo neck, but this is as close as it gets. Expect drama.

Rating: ★★★★★



Cap's status as a lone voice in a strange new world is one that will likely be played up.

"CAP WAS SLAMMED INTO THE MODERN WORLD AND SO HE'S GOING TO HAVE A STRONGER REACTION TO ITS COMPLEXITIES THAN WE ARE" ANTHONY RUSSO





COVER STORY

Captain America: The Winter Soldier

CAPTAIN ACCESSORISE

How Cap's costume has evolved over time



THE ULTIMATE OUTFIT

Captain America: The First Avenger (2011)

Steve Rogers looks every bit the super soldier in this Forties, *Ultimates*-inspired outfit. The design spared a thought for form and function, with a chinstrap and strategically placed pockets. It's grubby and robust, making us believe he could battle in the trenches with the best of them.

Rating: ★★★★★



SILVER AGE INSPIRED

Avengers Assemble (2012)

This garish get-up was director Joss Whedon's vision of what Cap should look like, and it's the Silver Age come to life, but we think it looks more bobsleigh team onesie. The body-con midriff and arm panels are very slimming, making him look less physically imposing.

Rating: ★★★★★



SUPER SOLDIER

Captain America: The Winter Soldier (2014)

These days, Rogers is stepping out in understated togs that help him blend better with his 21st century environment. Harking back to the *Steve Rogers: Super Soldier* run, this combines the comic-book fidelity of the second costume with the functionality of the first outfit.

Rating: ★★★★★



"TO FORCE CAPTAIN AMERICA AND BLACK WIDOW TOGETHER THROUGH CIRCUMSTANCES AND MAKE EITHER THEM TRUST OR NOT TRUST ONE ANOTHER IS A FUN DANCE TO WATCH THEM DO" ANTHONY RUSSO



Anthony Mackie will star as fellow agent Sam Wilson, aka the Falcon.



➤ dodge the same problem by moving the action to Asgard and the Nine Realms, but Captain America is the first to deal with the post-*Avengers Assemble* world head-on.

THIS IS THE BIGGEST BRIDGE TO JOSS WHEDON'S AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON, COMING IN 2015, WHICH IS SOMETHING THE DIRECTORS WERE FORCED TO CONSIDER WHEN MAKING THIS MOVIE, SEEDING PLOT THREADS FOR FUTURE FILMS.

"I think part of our history in television equips us for that, because we're used to dealing with storylines that stretch over many years," says Joe Russo, whose CV includes cult-favourite TV series such as *Arrested Development*, *Community* and *Happy Endings*. It was one of the reasons the Russo brothers' appointment to direct this sequel raised a few eyebrows, that and the fact that they also brought us the generic comedy *You, Me And Dupree*, but the trailer soon silenced naysayers. Marvel has become known for their left-field creator and cast choices, and they haven't set a foot wrong yet.

"Kevin Feige, who runs Marvel, is a really brilliant producer, and he likes to strike a balance between keeping things connected to the larger universe, but at the same making sure everything has the freedom to play on its own," Joe adds.

"I really respected how he's done that; he really wants each movie to be what it wants to be with as little consideration as possible for what's being done in the other work. I think that's a great way for him to maximise the individuality of each project and explore the limits to where we can take the storytelling."

It seems that *The Winter Soldier* will be the first film to do the star-spangled Avenger justice, revealing a side to him we've never seen before. Whedon worked impossible magic with *Avengers Assemble*, but fans yearned to see a glimpse of the inspiring, evocative comic-book Captain America amid the jokes at his expense from motormouth billionaire playboy philanthropist Tony Stark.

We may be dealing with very modern threats, the product of a worldview shaped by half a century of global events, from the Cold War to 9/11 and well into the War on Terror, but at its heart, *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* will be instantly recognisable to fans of the comic. It's not about the cameos and the bad-guys; it's about cutting right to the core of who Captain America is.

"We're comic-book fanatics," declares Anthony. "I started collecting comics when I was ten-years old, and I have a massive comic-book collection sitting in my closet at home. I think one of the first books I ever bought was a Captain America/Falcon team-up story, so it's ironic and wonderful that we're sitting here doing an interview about a Captain America/Falcon movie 30 years later."

"When I was a kid I always imagined Cap as Steve McQueen, because he had a bit of texture to him," he adds. "He'd flatten out to me when he was a bit of a boy scout, which is why I love Brubaker's run so much and I love *The Ultimates* – they brought a little bit of dirt and grit to the character, and that's what we hope to do with this film."

Captain America: The Winter Soldier will be released on 28 March.

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COVER STORY

Captain America

THE

15

GREATEST

CAPTAIN AMERICA

MOMENTS EVER

FROM CLOCKING OUT THE FÜHRER TO SPINE-
TINGLING SPEECHIFYING, CAPTAIN AMERICA
HAS INSPIRED AND EXCITED READERS FOR OVER
70 YEARS. WE SPOKE TO SOME OF COMICS'
BIGGEST NAMES TO FIND OUT THEIR FAVOURITE
ADVENTURES, BRAWLS AND LAST STANDS...



CAPTAIN AMERICA #332



- PUBLISHED: AUGUST 1987
- WRITER: MARK GRUENWALD
- PENCILS: TOM MORGAN
- INKS/COLORS: BOB MCLEOD, KEN FEDUNIEWICZ
- LETTERS: DIANA ALBERS
- COVER: MIKE ZECK, KLAUS JANSON

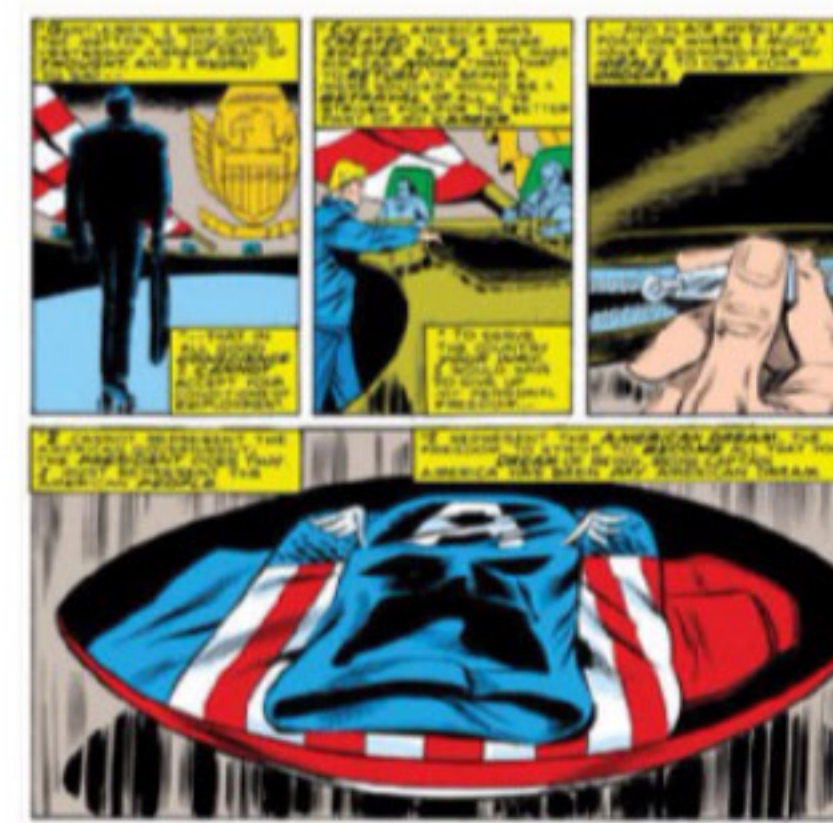
CHOSEN BY: MATT FRACTION

The Eisner Award-winning writer of *Invincible Iron Man*, *Immortal Iron Fist*, *Fantastic Four* and *Uncanny X-Men*, Matt Fraction is currently working on the critically acclaimed *Hawkeye* for Marvel and his provocative creator-owned series *Sex Criminals* for Image.

WHY IS IT GREAT?

It's not the first time Captain America hung up the shield, but it's one of the most powerful and affecting. Given an ultimatum by the government to fall in line and accept tighter controls, Rogers takes the only route left to him and quits. That the Red Skull is behind it all is irrelevant; this is all about people, independence versus oversight and justice versus law.

This was a United States that was still reeling from the revelations that



the Ronald Reagan administration had been selling arms to Iran, despite an international arms embargo, in order to fund the anti-communist Contras in war-torn Nicaragua. When Cap stood up to his government, faith in the White House and its shady security agencies was low for all but the most stalwart Republicans.

DAREDEVIL #233

02

» PUBLISHED: AUGUST 1975
» WRITER: ROY THOMAS
» PENCILS: DAVID MAZZUCHELLI
» INKS/COLORS: VINCE COLLETTA
» LETTERS: JOHN COSTANZA, GASPAR SALADINO
» COVER: JOHN ROMITA

WHY IS IT GREAT?

One of Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli's definitive *Daredevil* storylines also gave us one of the most iconic Captain America moments ever. As Matt Murdock's gruelling, bloody-knuckled struggle comes to its conclusion, suddenly the rest of the Marvel universe intrudes and we see Cap as we should: in awe. Outlined against the flames, reporter Ben Ulrich breathlessly describes, "A soldier with a voice that could command a god – and does."



THE AVENGERS #4

03

» PUBLISHED: MARCH 1964
» WRITER: STAN LEE
» PENCILS: JACK KIRBY
» INKS/COLORS: GEORGE ROUSSOS
» LETTERS: ARTIE SIMEK
» COVER: JACK KIRBY, PAUL REINMAN

WHY IS IT GREAT?

The Big Bang for the Marvel universe, its mighty ripples can be felt in *Avengers Assemble* and *Captain America: The First Avenger* as Cap is found in a block of ice by the Avengers. Disorientated he may be, but the Sentinel of Liberty gives no man the drop and proves he can take down the god of thunder, the iron-clad playboy and the super-sized scientist without breaking a sweat.



CAPTAIN AMERICA #115

04

» PUBLISHED: JULY 1969
» WRITER: STAN LEE
» PENCILS: JOHN BUSCEMA
» INKS/COLORS: SAL BUSCEMA
» LETTERS: SAM ROSEN
» COVER: MARIE SEVERIN, FRANK GIACOLA

WHY IS IT GREAT?

In a moment of pure Sixties trippiness, the Red Skull not only seizes the Cosmic Cube, but makes good on its power, rampaging all over Cap's psyche. Sal Buscema's art is all classic pop-art exuberance and grotesque, making for a surprising expressive Red Skull considering his freshless visage. For all the existential weirdness, somehow the most disquieting scene is our crimson-headed tyrant scrutinising his tapered cigarette holder, his feet up on the prone Rogers like a patriotic pouffe.



CAPTAIN AMERICA

15 Greatest Captain America Moments



CAPTAIN AMERICA #25

05

» PUBLISHED: APRIL 2007
» WRITER: ED BRUBAKER
» PENCILS: STEVE EPTING
» INKS/COLORS: FRANK D'ARMATA
» LETTERS: JOE CARAMAGNA
» COVER: STEVE EPTING, JOHN CASSADAY

WHY IS IT GREAT?

When Cap falls at the end of *Civil War*, he does so not in a brawl with some idiot in a domino mask, but like a statesman – gunned down on the courthouse steps, his fading words to Agent 13 an order to get the crowd to safety. Paced like a blockbuster, it's a masterpiece from writer Ed Brubaker and artist Steve Epting, and only marks the beginning of an arc that tugs at the heartstrings so hard that even Cap's eventual resurrection can't diminish its power.



COVER STORY

Captain America

AMERICA'S MOST WANTED

The 4 deadliest Captain America foes and how to deal with them



THE RED SKULL

One of Marvel's premier league bad guys, Cap and the twisted Johann Schmidt have fought each other across time.

First Appearance: Captain America

Comics #1 (March 1941)

Wanted for: Genocide, tyranny, persistence, mind control, abuse of the Cosmic Cube, plotting

Abilities: Genius, expert combatant, master strategist, sadist

Known associates: Sin, Crossbones, Mother Night, Adolf Hitler, HYDRA, AIM, Viper, the original Baron Zemo, Baron Strucker

Recommendation: Leave it to Cap, he's got this one

REWARD: \$2 MILLION



ARNIM ZOLA

Jack Kirby's weirdest Silver Age supervillain, Zola is a demented Nazi super-scientist who is reliant on silly looking robot bodies.

First Appearance: Captain America

#208 (April 1977)

Wanted for: Mad science, brass neck, pan-dimensional slaving, insanity

Abilities: Telepathic control, robot body swap, genius, a bit freaky

Known associates: The Red Skull

Recommendation: Punch him right in the face screen

REWARD: \$1.5 MILLION



BARON ZEMO

Purple-clad Nazi father and son, the latest Zemo – Helmut – is the swashbuckling founder of the Masters of Evil, who blames Cap for his father's death.

First Appearance: The Avengers #6 (July 1964)

Wanted for: Killing Bucky during WWII, looking fabulous, pretending to be a hero

Abilities: Expert swordsman, committed grudge-holder, master strategist

Known associates: Masters of Evil, Thunderbolts

Recommendation: Tell him that's not how his dad did it

REWARD: \$1 MILLION



BATROC THE LEAPER

Everyone's favourite worst villain is a moustache-twirling French thief and totally not a Nazi, which is a nice change.

First Appearance: Tales Of Suspense

#75 (March 1966)

Wanted for: Perpetuating stereotypes, being irritating, petty crime

Abilities: Kicking, being a good sport, agility, thief

Known associates: Thunderbolts, Masters of Evil

Recommendation: Sit him down with a nice wine and then tie his shoelaces together

REWARD: \$250



AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #537



» **PUBLISHED:** APRIL 2003

» **WRITER:** J MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI

» **PENCILS:** RON GARNEY

» **INKS/COLOURS:** BILL REINHOLD, MATT MILLA

» **LETTERS:** CHRIS ELIOPOULOS

» **COVER:** JOHN BUSCEMA, TOM PALMER

WHY IS IT GREAT?

It's pretty galling for fans, but one of Captain America's defining moments – and certainly his best speech in *Civil War* – doesn't actually happen in his own book or the main *Civil War* title. With Peter Parker undecided about his course of action after siding with Iron Man's pro-Registration faction, Cap pays him a visit and lays out a speech on sticking by your convictions that is so powerful we used it as our opening on page 18. Absolutely astonishing writing from J Michael Straczynski.



THE ULTIMATES #9



» **PUBLISHED:** APRIL 2003

» **WRITER:** MARK MILLAR

» **PENCILS:** BRYAN HITCH

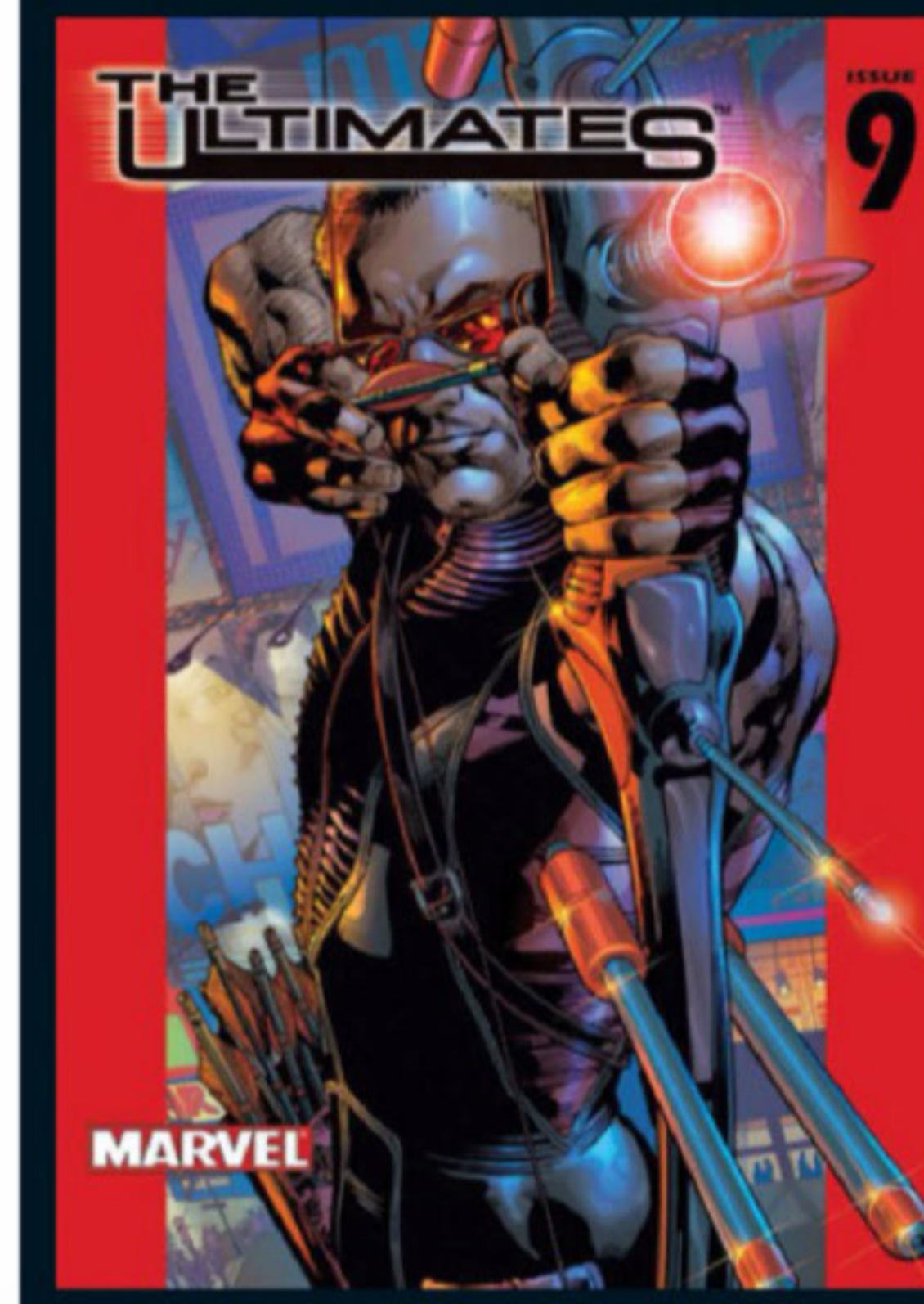
» **INKS/COLOURS:** PAUL MOUNTS

» **LETTERS:** CHRIS ELIOPOULOS

» **COVER:** JOHN BUSCEMA, TOM PALMER

WHY IS IT GREAT?

This rewriting of the Avengers for the age of Homeland Security may have presented a far more bullish Cap, but provocative writer/showman Mark Millar and wide-screen art god Bryan Hitch found an underlying truth that resonates across all incarnations of the character. While people overquote "You think this letter on my head stands for France?" it's Cap's beating of the giant-sized Hank Pym for abusing his wife that deserves to be recognised as a standout Captain America moment.



THE AVENGERS #277



» **PUBLISHED:** MARCH 1987

» **WRITER:** ROGER STERN

» **PENCILS:** JOHN BUSCEMA

» **INKS/COLOURS:** CHRISTIE SCHEEL, TOM PALMER

» **LETTERS:** JIM NOVAK

» **COVER:** JOHN BUSCEMA, TOM PALMER

WHY IS IT GREAT?

Baron Zemo and the Masters of Evil have laid siege to Avengers Mansion, tortured Jarvis and beaten our heroes, but in a quiet moment Cap finds the shattered chest of his pre-war memories and bursts into tears. Roger Stern was one of the great underrated *Avengers* writers, and here he cuts right to the heart of what it is to be 'a man outside time' in two panels where others would use two issues.



CAPTAIN AMERICA #156



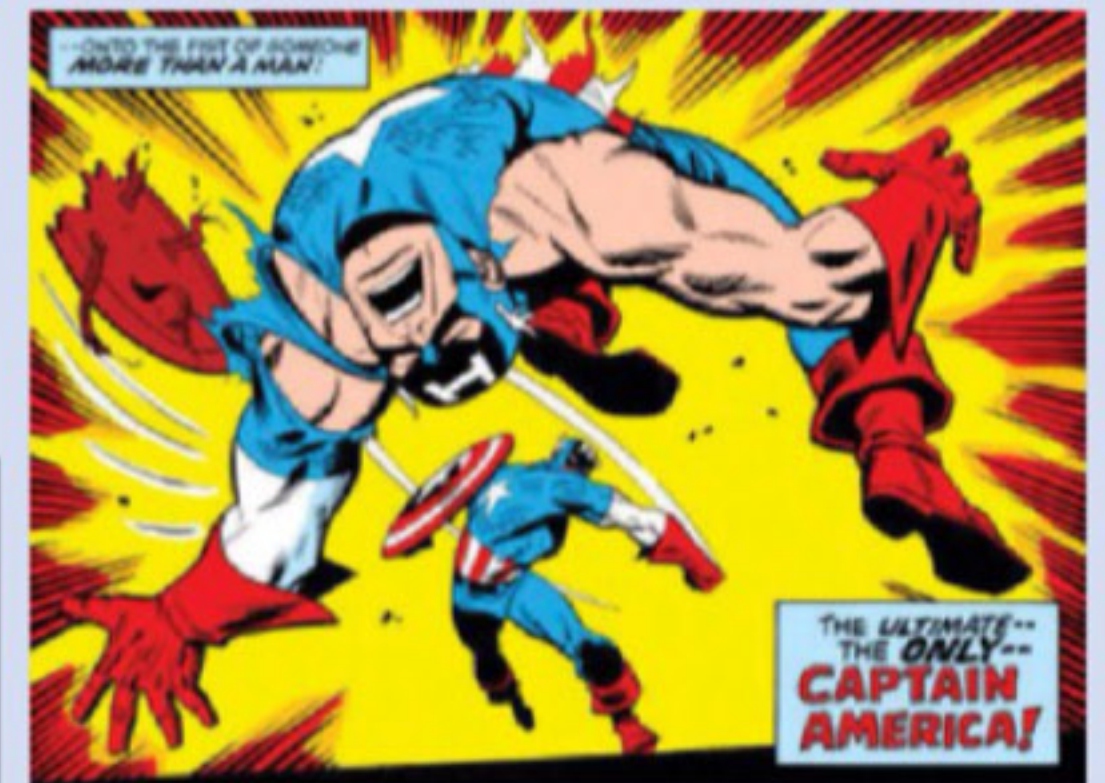
» PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 1972
 » WRITER: STEVE ENGLEHART
 » PENCILS: SAL BUSCEMA
 » INKS/COLORS: FRANK MCLOUGHLIN
 » LETTERS: SAM ROSEN
 » COVER: DAVE COCKRUM, SAL BUSCEMA

CHOSEN BY: ED BRUBAKER

Best known for an epic *Captain America* run that inspired *The Winter Soldier*, the multiple Eisner and Harvey Award-winning Ed Brubaker has also written *Gotham Central*, *Daredevil*, *Secret Avengers* and a series of critically acclaimed creator-owned titles: *Criminal*, *Incognito* and, most recently, *Fatale*, which is still ongoing at Image.

WHY IS IT GREAT?

In a deftly handled retcon of the Fifties anti-communist *Captain America* comics (which would have taken place while Cap was encased in ice, obviously), it's revealed that Fifties Cap and Bucky were different people – now turned poisonous bigots, believing that Rogers is an imposter they return to put him in his place. The racially loaded sparring between Fifties Bucky and Falcon is still shocking: “Not bad for a darkie, boy,” hisses the grinning red and blue sidekick.



Adding Falcon to the line-up may have been Stan Lee's dictat, but writer Steve Englehart used it to stab right at the heart of America's ethnic divide, forcing this paragon to confront the harsh reality. 1972 is the year of Watergate and Vietnam, but the long strides of Civil Rights loom large over the book.

“THE CAP FROM THE FIFTIES STORYLINE WAS MY FAVOURITE AS A KID. AND THE JIM STERANKO CAP ISSUES”
 ED BRUBAKER

TALES OF SUSPENSE #80



» PUBLISHED: AUGUST 1966
 » WRITER: STAN LEE
 » PENCILS: JACK KIRBY
 » INKS/COLORS: JACK ABEL
 » LETTERS: ARTIE SIMEK
 » COVER: DON HECK

CHOSEN BY: JM DEMATTEIS

Writer JM DeMatteis ushered in a new age of creativity with fully painted graphic novel *Moonshadow* and the semi-autobiographical *Brooklyn Dreams*, while entering the superhero pantheon with fan-favourite runs on DC's *Justice League* and Marvel's *Amazing Spider-Man* and *Captain America*. He is currently writing *Justice League Dark* and *Justice League 3000* for DC.

WHY IS IT GREAT?

The Red Skull's first lunge for the Cosmic Cube and an influence on *Captain America: The First Avenger*, ‘He Who Holds The Cosmic Cube’ is the second story in the title that Cap was forced to share with Iron Man for over 40 issues. The breakneck pace is a perfect match for the dynamic pencils of peak-era



Jack Kirby, obviously getting the most out of the ‘Marvel method’ by lunging from action scene to action scene – in the air, underwater, in a river, on an island – while Stan Lee writes himself into a frenzy by playing catch-up with occasionally over-burdened captions and speech bubbles.

The plot itself moves too fast to be anything other than glib, although it makes room for a moment of surprising bleakness as the Red Skull forces one of his flunkies to shoot himself for the hubris of placing himself on the same footing as the crimson-faced crim, and a wonderful face-off where Cap smack-talks about Hitler's suicide in order to keep his foe off-balance.



“I DON'T HAVE A SINGLE MOMENT, BUT I LOVE THE FIRST LEE-KIRBY RED SKULL COSMIC CUBE STORY”
 JM DEMATTEIS



RETROSPECTIVE

Captain America

CAPTAIN AMERICA COMICS #1



► **PUBLISHED:** MARCH 1941
 ► **WRITER:** JACK KIRBY, JOE SIMON
 ► **PENCILS:** JACK KIRBY, JOE SIMON
 ► **INKS/COLORS:** UNKNOWN
 ► **LETTERS:** UNKNOWN
 ► **COVER:** JACK KIRBY

WHY IS IT GREAT?

There's no understating the sheer ballsiness of this debut appearance from Captain America. Released in stores in December 1940 (although the cover date said March 1941), a full 12 months before the US had even joined World War II and when the public mood was still very much against getting involved, two second-generation Jewish immigrants in New York wrapped a man in the American flag and punched out Hitler.

The comic was a hit, and although creators Joe Simon and Jack Kirby received their fair share of threats, Kirby especially lived up to the legend they had created.

"Another time, Jack took a call. A voice on the other end said, 'There are three of us down here in the lobby. We want to see the guy who does this disgusting comic



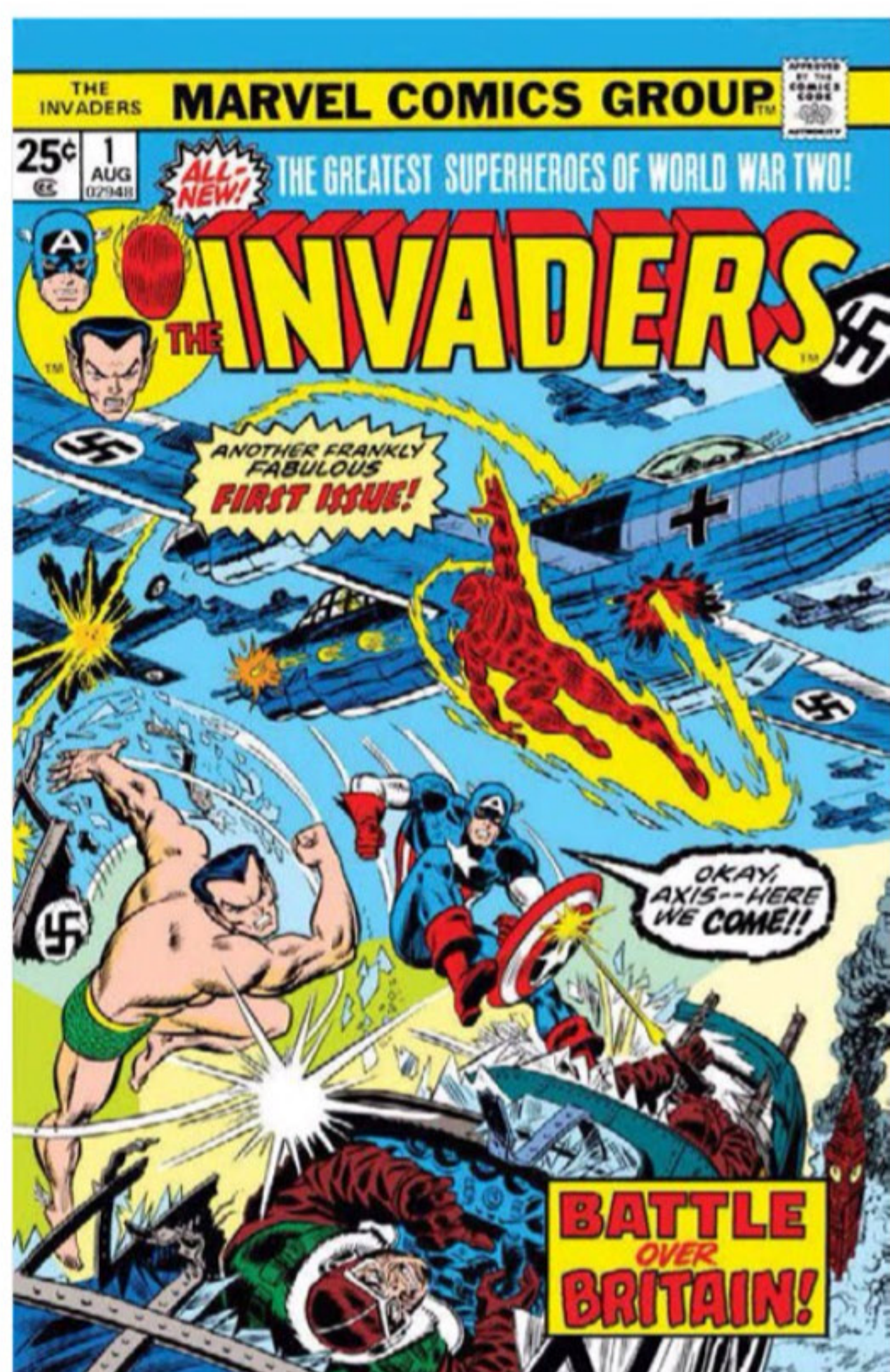
book and show him what real Nazis would do to his Captain America'. To the horror of others in the office, Kirby rolled up his sleeves and headed downstairs," recalled Mark Evanier's sublime biography, *Kirby: King Of Comics*.

The comic itself is a hot mess of short pieces and crude angry drawings of Nazis and punch-ups, but that cover is absolutely unbeatable.



All but one of the comics mentioned here (*Marvel Fanfare* #18) are available digitally via the Marvel Unlimited app, which for \$69 a year or \$9.99 a month (approx £41.50 and £6) allows you complete access to a whole world of digital comics on your tablet, smartphone or desktop computer.

Also CAPTAIN AMERICA'S YOUNG ALLY, BUCKY



INVADERS #1



► **PUBLISHED:** AUGUST 1975
 ► **WRITER:** ROY THOMAS
 ► **PENCILS:** FRANK ROBBINS
 ► **INKS/COLORS:** VINCE COLLETTA
 ► **LETTERS:** JOHN COSTANZA, GASPAR SALADINO
 ► **COVER:** JOHN ROMITA

CHOSEN BY: VALERIO SCHITI

One of the most undeniably graceful and instantly recognisable modern Marvel artists, Valerio Schiti brought humanity to Asgardian ass-kicker Lady Sif in *Journey Into Mystery*. Leaping from fantasy to sci-fi, he can now be found working with Sam Humphries on *Avengers: AI*.

WHY IS IT GREAT?

Though the whole concept struck a lot of readers as pretty goofy – retconning a team of superhumans into World War II and reducing the conflict to scraps with the Red Skull, Master Man and Agent Axis – *Invaders* was a fantastic romp. With action-packed throwback silliness where Nazis are rotters with silly accents and heroes are square-jawed quip-machines, Roy Thomas could turn sneezing into an adventure.

A labour of love for Thomas, external factors weren't an obvious influence, but with *Tora! Tora! Tora!*, *Patton* and *Kelly's Heroes* hitting the box office, there was still a hunger for tales of wartime bravado. By the decade's close, the morally profane bloodshed in Vietnam had thoroughly penetrated popular culture with *Apocalypse Now* and *The Deer Hunter*, and *Invaders* was cancelled.

"I LOVE THE IMAGE OF CAP JUMPING OFF A PLANE. I LOVED IT WHEN HE STILL USED TO DO IT WITH A PARACHUTE AND I LOVE IT EVEN MORE NOW THAT EVERY TIME HE JUMPS OFF (IN COMICS OR IN THE MOVIES) HE JUST... JUMPS. I THINK IT'S AN ICONIC IMAGE: A GUY (NOT A FLYING ONE!) LITERALLY JUMPING INTO DANGER ALMOST WITHOUT PROTECTION, WITH COURAGE AND SOME KIND OF NATURAL GRACE. THAT'S CAPTAIN AMERICA!"

VALERIO SCHITI





CAPTAIN AMERICA #14



► **PUBLISHED:** MARCH 2006
► **WRITER:** ED BRUBAKER
► **PENCILS:** STEVE EPTING
► **INKS/COLORS:** FRANK D'ARMATA, MICHAEL D PERKINS
► **LETTERS:** JOE CARAMAGNA
► **COVER:** STEVE EPTING, FRANK D'ARMATA

WHY IS IT GREAT?

Ed Brubaker and Steve Epting's run entered its teens with the now-classic *Winter Soldier* storyline, climaxing here with an epic scrap between the two that pushes Cap to his physical and emotional limits. As he pummels his kid sidekick-turned-Soviet assassin Bucky, he vows that "I can't fail you again."

Obviously an influence on the movie of the same name and perhaps the definitive 21st century arc, Brubaker and Epting established a new status quo for Cap as a man in his element in battle, but ultimately ill-at-ease with the shadowy world of in which his battle now takes place.



CAPTAIN AMERICA #176

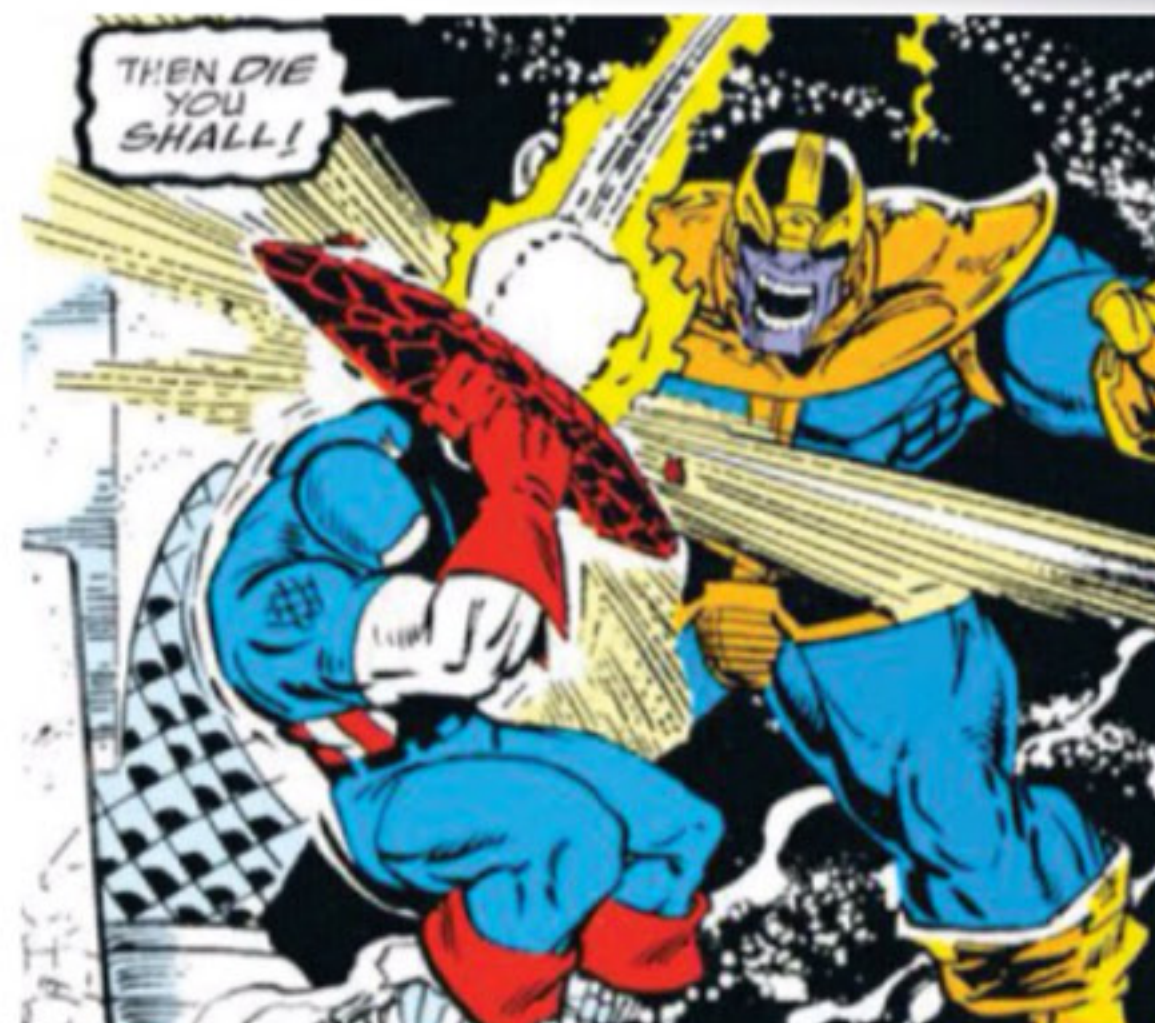


► **PUBLISHED:** AUGUST 1974
► **WRITER:** STEVE ENGLEHART
► **PENCILS:** SAL BUSCEMA
► **INKS/COLORS:** LINDA LESSMANN
► **LETTERS:** ARTIE SIMEK
► **COVER:** JOHN ROMITA, GASPARD SALADINO

WHY IS IT GREAT?

Steve Englehart's *Secret Empire* storyline delivers its killing blow as Steve Rogers decides he can no longer wear the colours of a nation whose values he cannot embrace. With a conspiracy at the heart of the White House – within the Oval Office itself – Englehart brought the Watergate scandal which engulfed Richard Nixon's presidency and the political disillusionment that followed into the very heart of the Marvel universe.

Steve Rogers doesn't just quit being Captain America; he virtually vanishes from his own title.



THE INFINITY GAUNTLET #4



► **PUBLISHED:** APRIL 2003
► **WRITER:** JIM STARLIN
► **PENCILS:** GEORGE PEREZ, ROB LIM
► **INKS/COLORS:** CHRISTIE SCHEELE, GEORGE PEREZ, JOE RUBINSTEIN, IAN LAUGHLIN
► **LETTERS:** JACK MORELLI
► **COVER:** JOHN BUSCEMA, TOM PALMER

WHY IS IT GREAT?

With the Mad Titan Thanos finally grasping the Infinity Gauntlet that affords him godlike power and threatening to call down a curtain of death and destruction upon all life, a motley band of heroes assemble to stop him. It's a cosmic epic from those masters of the cosmic epic, writer Jim Starlin and artist George Perez – the stakes are high and the chance of success slim.

Hulk, Namor, Quasar, Silver Surfer, Scarlet Witch – some of Marvel's strongest go into bat, but ultimately it comes down to one man in blue, with a shield the size of a dustbin lid and a pool of courage the size of an ocean. Against a foe he simply cannot beat, Cap stands his ground: "All false gods eventually fall."

PATRIOT LAME

5 Captain America stories that just sucked

CAPWOLF

Captain America #405 (August 1992)

1 The infamous 'CapWolf' story arc reaches its apogee in which Steve Rogers becomes a werewolf. You know how *The Punisher: Frankencastle* turned out to be surprisingly fun despite sounding awful? Well, this is just awful.



CAP ON DRUGS

Captain America #372 (July 1990)

2 Steve Rogers on drugs is up there with Roy Harper on drugs. When crystal meth bonds with his super-soldier serum, Cap goes nuts, stops shaving, turns into a douche bag and has to be beaten up by Black Widow.



ROBOCAP

Captain America #438 (April 1995)

3 Cap dons some armour like one of those Moon Rescue Batman-type action figures. It's not a select club either; Daredevil, Catwoman, Batman, Superman and Booster Gold also raided Iron Man's bins within the same five-year span.



CAP VS WIKILEAKS

Secret Avengers #12.1 (April 2011)

4 He went against the government and was booted out of the Illuminati when he couldn't keep quiet, but when an ersatz Julian Assange leaks the details of the US's dealings with superpowered terrorists, Cap takes him to the cleaners.



CAP VS THE WORKING CLASS

Marvel Fanfare #18 (January 1982)

5 When protesting workers get out of hand, Cap sets them right. His wisdom: don't burn the flag and stop looking for handouts. To think everyone was surprised when artist Frank Miller lashed out at Occupy Wall Street...





INVESTIGATION

Patriotic Superheroes

WHY WAS CAPTAIN AMERICA CREATED AND WHY DOES HE ENDURE?

HOME OF THE BRAVE





CAPTAIN AMERICA IS THE MOST FAMOUS PATRIOT, BUT HE WASN'T THE FIRST. WE BURROW INTO THE HEART OF THE AMERICAN COMIC-BOOK HERO, FROM WARTIME PROPAGANDA TO POST-WAR JINGOSIM, AND DISCOVER WHY CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS OUTLASTED HIS PEERS...

WORDS HAZEL WARD

WHEN IT COMES TO EYE-CATCHING IMAGES ON THE NEWSSTANDS, NOTHING QUITE BEATS A RED, WHITE AND BLUE-BEDECKED SUPERHERO

punching out Hitler. It's one of the most visceral covers in comics history, and with that iconic blow, Captain America joined World War II a full 12 months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, at a time when most of the US was ambivalent at best about entering the combat.

Captain America, aka Steve Rogers, appeared in his own series in 1940 at Marvel Comics (then called Timely). The creation of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, Rogers knew his duty was to serve his country, and that meant enlisting in the service at any cost, despite his various physical ailments.

However, good ol' Cap was not the first hero to embody American patriotism. In January 1940, many months prior to Captain America's debut, Archie Comics (then MLJ) introduced The Shield, the alter-ego of Joe Higgins, who took his father's super-strength formula and became a superhero (yes, there is some similarity with Cap there – apparently back then superheroes had to share origin stories). Meanwhile, Superman, although technically Kryptonian, had been embraced as an icon of the American dream, standing, as we all know for truth, justice and the American way, and in her role as Ambassador to America, Wonder Woman took on the country's colours and ideology.

Others, such as Mr America, Ms America, Ms Victory, The Eagle, Phantom Eagle,

Captain Flag, Yankee Girl, US Jones, Patriot, Yank & Doodle, Fighting Yank and V-Man joined the ranks of heroes with a predilection for wearing an American flag (luckily, most of them came from different comic universes, otherwise the weekly hero meetings could have been very confusing for a while). Jason Dittmer, author of *Captain America And The Nationalist Superhero: Metaphors, Narratives And Geopolitics*, brings up past icons of national identity, pointing out that "ideas like 'Britain' or 'America' are so complex – all those people, all those institutions – that they need to be reduced down to a metaphor." He draws comparisons between the likes of Lady Liberty and Britannia, and superheroes of the Forties who took on the mantle of national identity.

There is another factor in the number of patriotic heroes. During the late Thirties and early Forties, many Jewish writers and creators had turned to the comics industry for employment, since at the time other publishing careers such as advertising were effectively closed to them. They frequently took conventionally American names as a way to 'become' American – you're probably familiar with Bob Kane as the creator of Batman, but his parents knew him as Robert Kahn, while Jacob Kurtzberg went through a few names before deciding on Jack Kirby. Many people have pointed out the close link ➤



By the time the US entered World War II in 1941, patriotic superheroes were a dime a dozen.

JACK KIRBY AND JOE SIMON KNEW THE NAZIS WERE THE BAD GUYS WELL BEFORE THE REST OF AMERICA MADE UP ITS MIND
JASON DITTMER





INVESTIGATION

Patriotic Superheroes

➤ between the creation of superhero comics and the oppression and discrimination of Jewish people.

Most of these writers were second-generation immigrants, struggling between identities. They were Jewish, and also American; they had a role in shaping the culture, but were also isolated from it in some way. Whether they were alien 'immigrants' like Superman or American-born soldiers such as Rogers, the throng of red, white and blue heroes was a way for Jewish creators to explore the national identity of their new home and mirror America back to itself in a way that only outsiders could. That's not to say it was purposeful: Kirby often denied the existence of any political messages in his work. Yet while he and his peers were inking the latest adventures, updates about the atrocities in Europe would filter through to them from friends and relatives still living across the Atlantic.

"They knew the Nazis were the bad guys well before the rest of America made up its mind," says Dittmer. It's not surprising that creators incorporated their frustration and horror into the fantastic adventures they wrote. It was a time when the real world

needed heroes. Pen and ink superheroes provided hope and wish fulfilment, showing caped crusaders fighting fascism with only a powerful uppercut and a pun-derful quip.

THE FALCON HAS TO TEACH CAPTAIN AMERICA TO SEE THE RACISM AT THE HEART OF AMERICAN CULTURE

JASON DITTMER

OF COURSE, SUPER-PATRIOTS WERE NOTHING WITHOUT THEIR SUPERVILLAINS. WHILE COMIC-BOOK HEROES NOW DUKE IT OUT WITH FEROCIOUS SPACE CREATURES

and unstable scientists, Captain American and his fellow patriots took on real threats, undisguised by symbolism or metaphors. Nazis and later Japanese soldiers were seen as real-life supervillains, which gave artists and writers the perfect foil for their fictional creations. With a nation's hatred of fascism supporting them, writers were free to litter their pages with grossly caricatured German and Japanese villains, typified as cowardly, pathetic sub-humans, yet still capable of giving America a bloody nose until the heroes came along. Most terrifying of all was

Cap's main foe, the Red Skull, a hideous crimson Nazi emblazoned with a swastika. As Dittmer notes, "One of the effects of these comics is that they import the moral clarity of the superhero universe into our own perceptions of 'real' history."

In some ways, these comic-books also served as low-level propaganda, presenting characters who were so besotted with their country that they'd risk their lives, and many books of the time included pleas for readers to support the war effort at home. "You too are a superhero," the comics seemed to say.

Comics were frequently shipped across to American troops as well, and were thought to foster feelings of national pride and bolster the morale of troops. However by the time 1945 came around, the war had been won, and slowly the effects of the war receded. *Captain America's* first run struggled on until 1949, when it ceased production. There were a few aborted attempts to continue the glory days when the nation was united against fascism, but ultimately the patriotic fervour of World War II faded. As the Cold War progressed, some comics tried to incorporate anti-communist storylines in the same way

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

Who else took the Captain's name?

ISAIAH BRADLEY



In a storyline which echoed the real-life Tuskegee syphilis trials, African-American Isaiah and his peers were injected with

the super-serum without their consent. All the subjects died apart from Isaiah, who went on to be known as 'the black Captain America'

WILLIAM NASLAND



As a way to retcon Captain America's exploits during the Fifties, it was revealed that Truman had actually

appointed Nasland, aka second-stringer The Spirit Of '76, as Cap's replacement after the original had disappeared in combat.

WILLIAM BURNSIDE



Beware the dangers of incomplete super-serum. Burnside took a bad batch, changed his name to Steve Rogers

and embarked on a crazed war against communism in the Fifties. Like so many other heroes, it all ended in forced suspended animation for him.

JAMES 'BUCKY' BARNES



Following Rogers' death in 2007, Bucky took on the role of Captain America, according to his mentor's wishes,

although he operated by his own rules. Bucky faked his death after a period of controversy, and Rogers returned to take up the shield.

With the war's end in 1945, characters like Captain America would struggle to find their place.





FREEDOM'S FIGHTERS

Who are the most patriotic superheroes?



UNCLE SAM

Not that Uncle Sam, but a hero formed whenever the spirit of America binds itself to a dying patriot. Hosts for the spirit have included a revolutionary war hero, a fighter from WWI and Samuel, a WWII soldier.

First Appearance: *National Comics* #1

Patriot Points: The founding fathers themselves created the American spirit during some patriotic hi-jinks. Plus, his superpowers wax and wane according to the strength of American citizens' faith in freedom and liberty.



CAPTAIN FLAG

Tom Townsend was about to be killed by kidnappers when an eagle smashed through the window and carried him off to safety. Captain Flag was born.

First Appearance: *Blue Ribbon Comics* #16

Patriot Points: His sidekick is the symbol of American glory, the eagle; specifically, a bird called Yank the Eagle (that's not a euphemism). Yank was so patriotic, she even brought an American flag back to the nest, which Tom repurposed as his costume.



STAR SPANGLED KID

Kid hero Sylvester Pemberton took on the superhero mantle after Nazi sympathisers threatened to disrupt a 4 July celebration.

First Appearance: *Star Spangled Comics* #1

Patriot Points: Despite having no superpowers, the Star-Spangled Kid made it his duty to fight off fascism with the aid of his mechanic sidekick Stripsey. Plus, anyone willing to bear the weight of the moniker Star-Spangled Kid is probably due some props just for ridiculous patriotism.

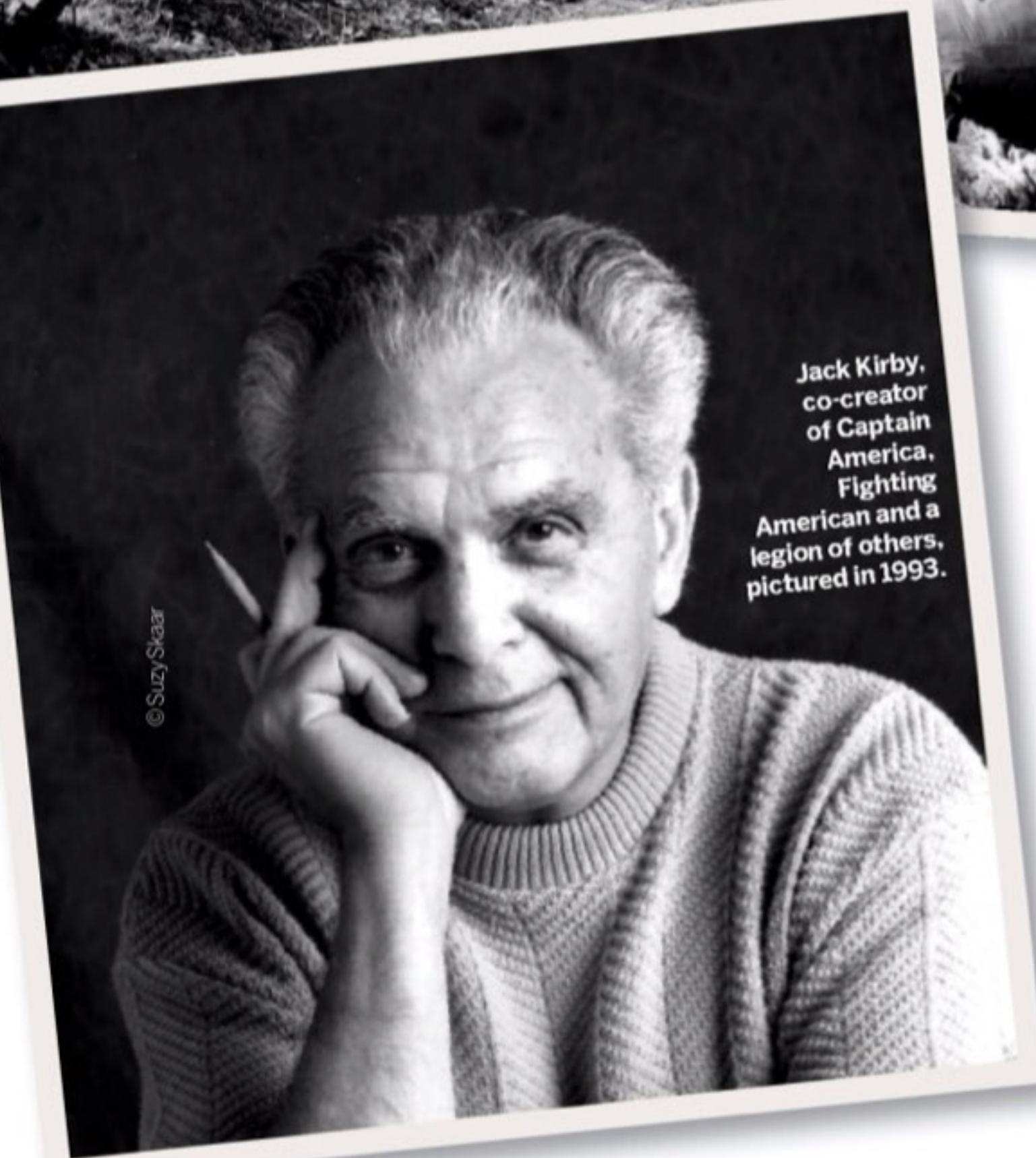


LIBERTY BELLE

Like many Forties heroes, Libby Lawrence saw the horrors of Nazism first-hand when her father was killed in Poland. After a daring escape across the Channel, she assumed the alter-ego Liberty Belle as a tribute to the Liberty Bell.

First Appearance: *Boy Commandos* #1

Patriot Points: she shares a mystical connection with the famous Liberty Bell itself, gaining super-strength and other powers whenever the bell is rung.



Jack Kirby, co-creator of Captain America, Fighting American and a legion of others, pictured in 1993.

they had used WWII plots. The most extreme example was Quality Comics' *T-Man*, which followed the thrilling exploits of a US Treasury agent (it managed to last from 1951 to 1956). When Captain America returned in the 1954 to do battle with communism, readers no longer appeared willing to accept blind devotion to nationalism. During the McCarthy years, patriotism was co-opted by jingoistic zeal, so when Captain America decided to wage war on communists, comic fans were unimpressed; his books sold poorly, and the run was cancelled. That same year, Kirby and Simon went hunting for reds under the bed with Prize Comics' *Fighting American*. Though their title took a swerve into the satirical and the ridiculous, he lasted only seven issues. It seemed that even the fathers of the form couldn't make flag-clad superheroes cool anymore.

Jump forward to 22 July 2011. A flash of red, white and blue bounds across the screen, and a familiar round shield glints in the light. *Captain America: The First Avenger* opens and grosses over \$65 million in the first weekend. His path back into the consciousness not only of comic fans, but of the wider world audience, led to two solo-

title movies and juicy parts in the *Avengers Assemble* franchise.

How did Captain America manage to avoid obscurity when so many other patriot-themed heroes failed?

A CYNICAL VIEW IS THAT THE NATION'S EGO WOULD BE SOOTHED BY THE RE-EMERGENCE OF A HERO WHO CONFIRMS ITS OWN GOODNESS AND SUPERIORITY. BUT IS

that fair? Certainly on first appearance, Captain America seems little more than the embodiment of a country's pride: after all, he does dress in a deconstructed American flag, and his name misses subtlety by a wide margin, while his devotion to the military and American ideals only confirm this. Nostalgia surely played some part in Cap's popularity, too; who wouldn't like to curl up with a childhood hero who echoed the supposedly 'easy' moral choices of the past?

But Cap's third coming also coincided with a nation fractured and no longer united by a common outside enemy. "When he comes back he is much more consumed with the internal divisions within the United States than in foreign intervention," notes Mark White, professor and author of *The Virtues Of Captain America: Modern-Day*

Lessons On Character From A World War II Superhero. "He still believes in the system – it's the people in the system that often let the country down." While in the past Rogers embodied everything America thought of itself, now he took on the spirit of an America less certain of its own superiority, but still sure that the founding principles of liberty, truth and equality were the best the country had to offer.

"His patriotism is a very cosmopolitan patriotism, and he not only holds his own government to those ideals, but also demands that they be extended to people of every nation. He may have learned those ideals as an American, but he applies them universally throughout the world," continues White.

White explains his own view of Cap's longevity. "Two reasons, one perhaps more realistic and the other which I prefer," he laughs. "The first is that Cap had the better writers and stories, and he had the marketing might of the Marvel Comics machine – also known as Stan Lee – behind ➤

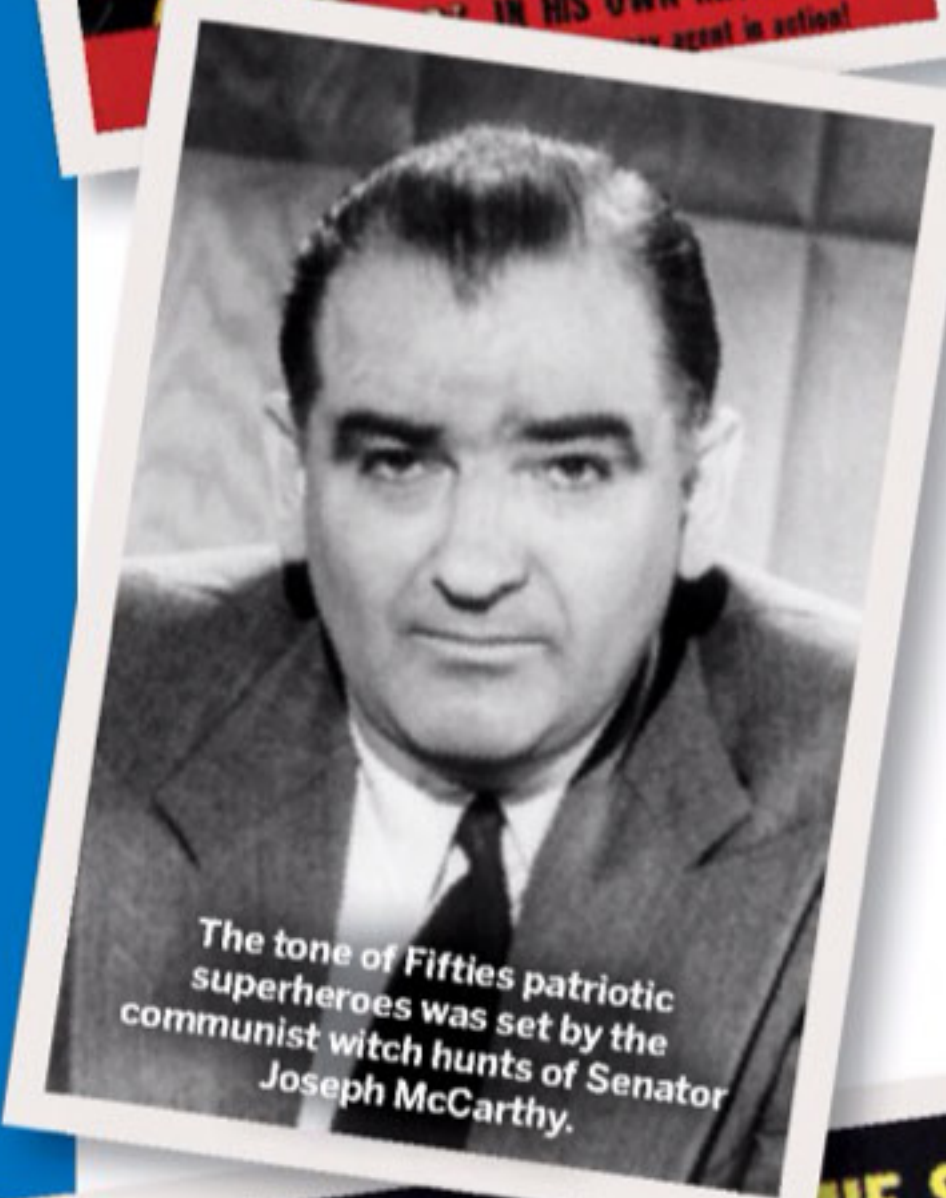
Miss America was another popular all-American superhero





INVESTIGATION

Patriotic Superheroes



The tone of Fifties patriotic superheroes was set by the communist witch hunts of Senator Joseph McCarthy.



➤ him." His other explanation lies in the core values of Cap's character: "Not just 'political' values like justice and equality, but also personal virtues like honesty and courage, which people still regard as important and to which they still aspire today."

CAP'S NEW ADVENTURES BEGAN IN 1964, ALTHOUGH FIRST MARVEL HAD TO UNDO THE UNFORTUNATE 'COMMIE-SMASHING' ERA OF THE FIFTIES. LUCKILY, COMICS CONTINUITY

can be over-written by anything from Skrull replacements to simply ignoring stories, and Cap's actions were waved away as the scheme of an imposter. In a narrative conceit particularly suited to comic-books, it was revealed that at the very end of World War II, Captain America had actually been frozen beneath the ice during a WWII mission that also apparently claimed sidekick Bucky's life. Thanks to the super-serum, Cap spent the next 20 years living the life of a popsicle. It was a neat trick on the part of Marvel writers: by the time Cap was thawed out, the politics and ideologies that had shaped both him and America had changed. Rather than updating his origin story or simply waving

away his dated roots, the writers embraced his archaic, almost quaint worldview. Just as the world between the pages had moved on without Captain America, the comic-buying public had passed the character by. He emerged to worlds real and fictional as a relic of past ideals.

"He was reintroduced to a world when the 'good guys' weren't always good and the 'bad guys' weren't ambiguously bad. He still adhered to his core principles of right and wrong, but discovered that applying those principles wasn't as easy as it seemed to be in the Forties – and, in fact, it had never been as easy as he thought," says White. Dittmer also points out that "the overarching story of Captain America since 1963 has been a 'man out of time', struggling to accommodate himself to the 'new' America in which he finds himself."

This 'new' America provided Cap with lots of conflict. In a fictionalised account of Watergate, Cap faced his biggest encounter with government corruption in his beloved country. Rather than blindly supporting those in power, Cap reacted by throwing off his title as a sign of his disillusionment

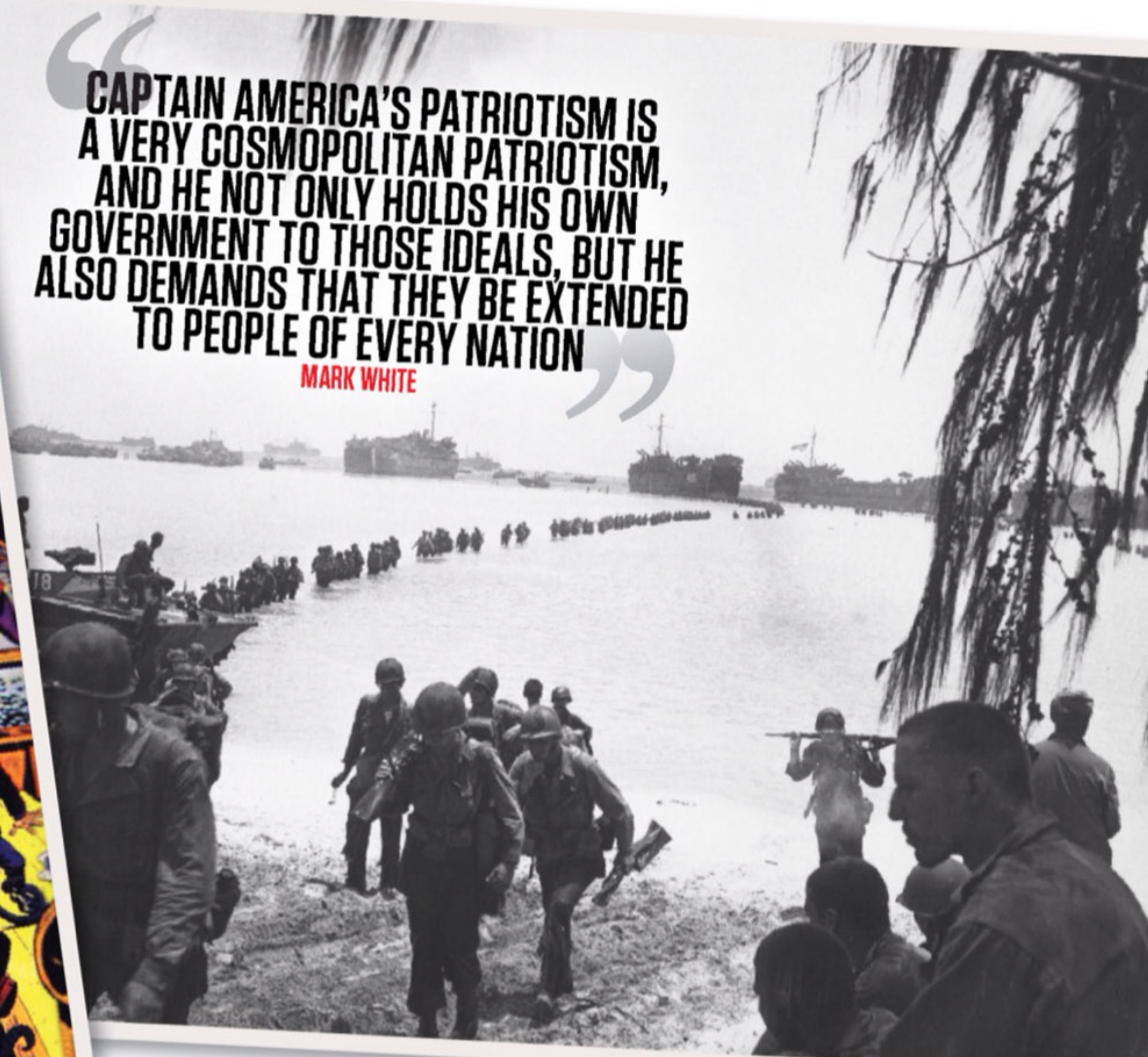
and taking on another: Nomad – the hero without a country – rose up in his place for a few years.

Social change became a mine for stories, too. Race and gender issues came to the forefront, and the comics industry had to make sure they weren't left behind. Although the African-born Black Panther appeared in 1966, *Captain America* #117 – published in 1969, the year after Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King was shot – saw the first African-American superhero in the Falcon. He and Cap became partners, eventually sharing the cover and title from 1971 until 1978. Rather than ignoring prejudice through Cap's own innate sense of equality, they used it to explore the theme, according to Dittmer: "They turn his colour-blindness against him. The Falcon has to teach him to see the racism at the heart of American culture, because Captain America just doesn't notice it."

The most striking real-world story was 11 September 2001. Seen as an assault on the US itself, it would have been awkward had Captain America not dealt with the terrorist attacks in some way. White sums up Cap's

CAPTAIN AMERICA'S PATRIOTISM IS A VERY COSMOPOLITAN PATRIOTISM, AND HE NOT ONLY HOLDS HIS OWN GOVERNMENT TO THOSE IDEALS, BUT HE ALSO DEMANDS THAT THEY BE EXTENDED TO PEOPLE OF EVERY NATION

MARK WHITE





CAN YOU DIG IT?

Andy Diggie talks about writing Captain America: Living Legend



On Captain America's character:

Simple decency and rugged self-reliance pretty much sums it up. I'd say he has much in common with Superman – that sense of humble, good old-fashioned decency.

On what Captain America represents:

The notion of fairness, the idea that anyone can succeed if they work hard and play fair, goes right to the heart of the American Dream, and I think Cap embodies that. The

fact that he was just an ordinary Joe who signed up, and ended up becoming this paragon. True or not, I think that's how America likes to see itself.

On writing Captain America:

I have a problem with jingoistic nationalism, from whatever country, and I was aware that could be a problem. That's one of the reasons I cooked up a story where "My country, right or wrong" wouldn't be an issue.

On American politics:

I deliberately avoided them. If you want to write a story about the nature of American nationalism, a comic called *Captain America* probably isn't the best place to do it – not without pissing off the fan base, at least.

On the reasons for Cap's continued success:

Jack and Stan.

On the role of nostalgia:

The 'man out of time' aspect has been central to the character since his 'rebirth' in the Sixties, so nostalgia is an inherent part of what makes him tick – more so than most other decades-old characters. I tried to reflect that in the story itself, in the flashbacks sections, rather than have it be something he dwells on himself.

Captain America: Living Legend is ongoing from Marvel Comics. Pick it up from all good comic stores or digitally via the Comixology app.



Captain America gained an African-American partner, the Falcon, only one year on from Martin Luther King's assassination.

UPERHEROES
Home Of The Brave



➤ approach to the events: "His attitude was both responsive and responsible, promising to take the fight to the enemy, but being very careful to know who that enemy was... he prevented a grieving man from attacking a random Middle Eastern man on the street, telling him 'he's not the enemy.'"

Post 9/11, Captain America found himself balanced uneasily between pro and anti-war factions, unwilling to be claimed by either one. "9/11 and the War on Terror was tricky," says Dittmer. "They tried to engage with the context of Islamic terrorism without resorting to anti-Islamic caricatures, and they tried to 'balance' it by talking about how it was blowback for American foreign policy."

During the war in Afghanistan, the motives behind American participation were questioned vigorously, in contrast with the mostly pro-action consensus for World War II. Marvel took those themes and created the acclaimed *Civil War* arc, which pitted Iron Man and Captain America against each other over the Superhuman Registration Act, a thinly veiled allusion to the Patriot Act. Once again, Cap showed that he was no tool of the status quo, mounting an opposition to this threat to liberty, which ultimately led to his murder. Whether the death is seen as symbolic of the death of American ideals or of patriotic identity, the story is a powerful

one, and news of his demise was picked up by the mainstream press. In true comic-book style, however, Cap came back right when the world needed him most, and since then has continued to apply his high ideals to a flawed world.

According to Dittmer, "The trick for the writers is to keep Captain America in touch with contemporary values while nevertheless making it seem like he never changes. In truth, this is the challenge of the nation-state – pretending there is some fundamental essence that links all these people and things together throughout time." In other words, what keeps Captain America relevant is tied in with America's own changing ideas of itself as a country and an identity. Backed by a multi-million dollar publishing company and a sense of nostalgic regret, Captain America couldn't help but find renewed success, and yet ultimately he has endured simply because he has managed to encapsulate America – flaws and all – for the world. As long as the American dream has a hold on popular culture, Cap isn't going anywhere. ☞

Many of the comics mentioned here are available digitally from Comixology or Marvel Unlimited, and we urge you to check them out!

THE FIRST HALF OF THE SERIES RECEIVED A LUKEWARM RECEPTION, BUT **MARVEL'S AGENTS OF SHIELD RETURNS** PROMISING MORE EXPLOSIVE ACTION, DEEPER STORYLINES AND THE TRUTH BEHIND **AGENT COULSON'S MYSTERIOUS RESURRECTION**. UNDER INTENSE INTERROGATION, THE CAST AND CREW REVEAL ALL...



THE SECRET'S OUT

WORDS DAVID SCARBOROUGH

MARVEL'S AGENTS OF SHIELD WAS MEANT TO BE JOSS WHEDON'S TRIUMPHANT RETURN TO TELEVISION. BASED IN A POST-AVENGERS WORLD WHERE THE EXISTENCE OF SUPERHEROES IS PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND EARTH IS THREATENED BY BOTH NATIVE AND otherworldly forces, the globe-trotting pilot episode (scripted and directed by the *Avengers Assemble* helmer himself) introduced a ragtag band of secret agents led by Agent Phil Coulson (Clark Gregg), last seen skewered by the pointy end of Loki's sceptre in *Avengers*. But even his resurrection wasn't enough to ensure the continued success of the series that, after skyrocketing to record ratings in the US, has dipped in favour in both the eyes of critics and viewers. Complaints that the first ten episodes only skimmed the surface of its talented ensemble, lacked the stakes of its blockbuster brethren and piled on the mystery without any resolution led many to see it as a catastrophe even Tony Stark and co would struggle to recover from.

But this was just the setup for something much bigger, according to executive producer Jeph Loeb, who explains how the show needed to establish a unique tone for a serialised drama to differentiate itself from Marvel's exploits on the silver screen: "What's important for us is that the show has to live within its own world so that, otherwise, we would constantly be running into the movies," he tells us. "And so we need to be able to tell our stories, create our characters, have our action, you know, in a way that is unique and fun. When you just do the maths, we're going to do 22 hours this season. So if you think about that, that would be 11 movies, which would be more than the number of movies they've made so far, and that's just our first year."

And with just ten episodes shown in the UK to date, the second season will pick up the pace immediately. When last we saw the team, hacktivist Skye (Chloe Bennet) began to uncover the truth behind her missing parents' involvement with SHIELD, super-powered Mike Peterson (played by Whedon regular J August Richards) sacrificed himself to save Coulson, who himself has been captured by the elusive organisation known as Centipede, out to discover the secret behind his revival – the answer confirmed to be revealed in the first episode after the mid-season break. ➤



MUST-SEE TV

Agents Of SHIELD



⇒ “It’s sort of a remarkable place to be in the second half, because all of the secrets and lies that we’ve told you in the first half, we get to either tell you more secrets and lies or reveal things,” teases Loeb. “That’s the fun of the show: you never really quite know what the truth is... nor do our actors.”

“I don’t know what’s in upcoming episodes!” confirms an ever-bullient Gregg, the fan-favourite actor who continues to bring an everyman perspective to the Marvel universe. “In a way, that’s really frustrating and also really helpful. Every once in a while it’s good there’s something that Clark doesn’t know that Coulson [does].”

One thing that both Gregg and Coulson are equally in the dark about is how SHIELD was able to save Coulson after his unfortunate demise in *Avengers Assemble*. While the first half of the season explored the impact of the character’s near-death experience – often mysteriously referring to Tahiti, where he spent a week recovering, as a “magical place” – all might not be quite as it seems. Gregg points towards the truth as a major turning point in the character going forward.

“To have someone who’s walking around having been in combat, carrying a trauma that he thinks he knows everything about, that he thinks he’s healed, that is so much deeper and more crippling than he imagined, and to be feeling like he needs to get that sorted out in order to be a good parent to his family of agents, it feels like an important thing to be talking about,” he says.

HOWEVER, HE WON’T BE THE ONLY CHARACTER HAUNTED BY GHOSTS FROM THE PAST. MELINDA MAY (MING-NA WEN), THE TEAM’S TACITURN PILOT, WEAPONS EXPERT AND ALL-ROUND KICK-ASS HEROINE HAS, MUCH LIKE COULSON, BEEN CONCEALING A SECRET SINCE THE VERY first episode. “I hope they keep ‘Cavalry’ going,” says Ming-Na Wen, discussing Agent May’s nickname, which was coined due to a troubling event prior to her joining Coulson’s team. “For me, as an audience member, I love watching a show where things are not presented right away; where it maintains some of the mystery and the intrigue and how it all ties in with maybe other characters or storylines. So it’s a trickle effect, but you will get some in the next episode about her, her background and why she’s so scarred.”

“As we move forward, things will be revealed,” adds executive producer Jeffrey Bell. “We’ll turn over cards as we go along, but I

“AS WE MOVE FORWARD, THINGS WILL BE REVEALED”

JEFFREY BELL



Hopefully we’ll find out more about Agent May’s mysterious past.

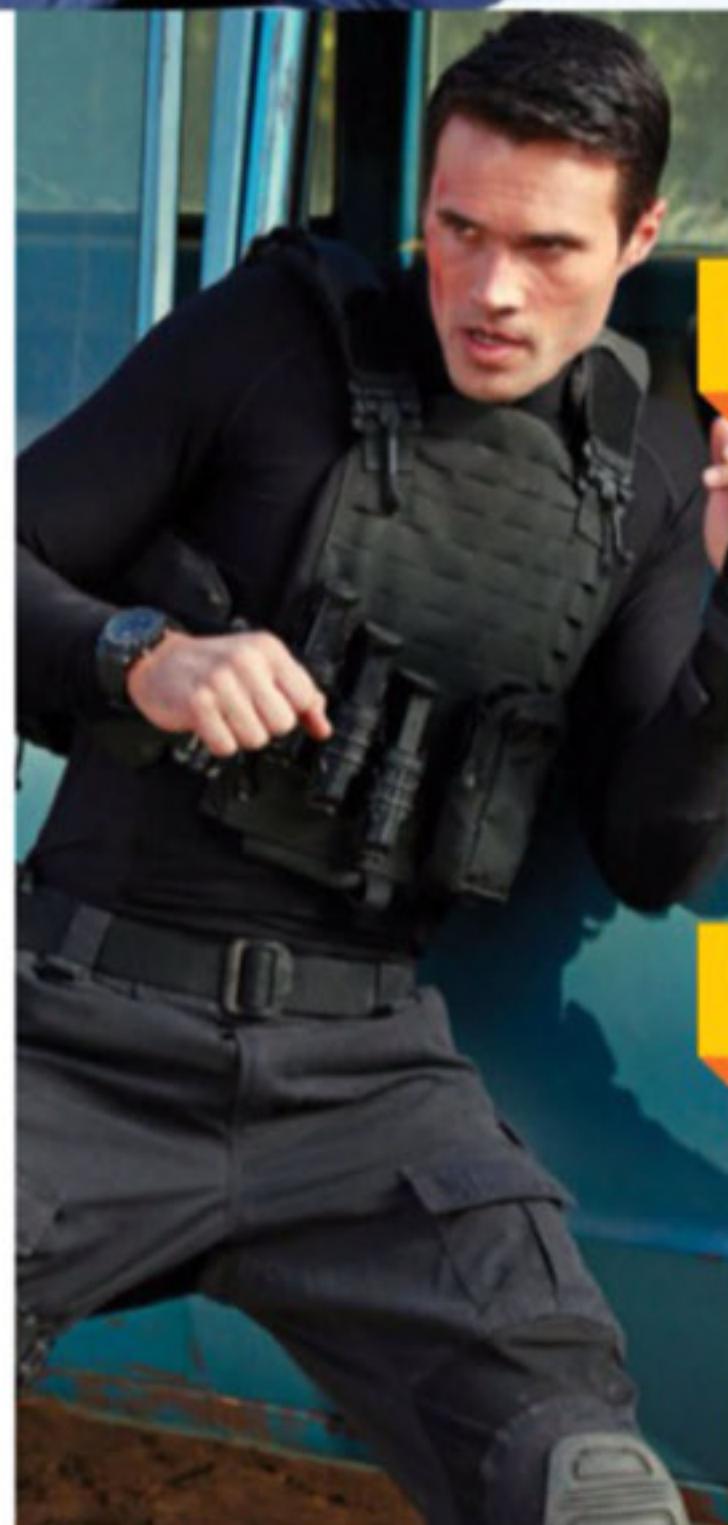
think there’s some nice surprises in store. We’ve got mysteries about what happened with Coulson. We’ve got questions about May’s past. We’ve got things you’ll see about Ward’s past. And Skye is a big question mark. So I think all of those back stories can tie into mythology, [and] can tie into stories in a way that we really couldn’t in the first half.”

It appears that a lot of the criticisms levelled at the show are being directly addressed; delving into the intrigue at the heart of SHIELD and focusing on the individual characters rather than solely on the show’s MacGuffin-of-the-week drama. “Early on, we had to establish everybody before we can really just dive into an episode about one of them,” explains Loeb. “And so early on we tried to keep everybody in the stories. But now as we move later in the season, it is easier. Now that the audience has gotten to know the characters, we can focus on one or another more, and we asked a lot of questions about their history, and now we can start to answer some of those questions as we move forward.”

That includes the show’s biggest enigma: Skye. The cyber-activist turned SHIELD agent has had questionable motivations thus far, using her newfound access to investigate the mysterious disappearance of her parents. “Everything that drives her from the beginning of the whole series is finding her family,” says Bennet. “She’s a young woman who has no family and doesn’t really have any friends. And anyone in that position, I feel like, would be curious. She named herself. She doesn’t even know her real name. So everything that drives her is finding her family.”



The chemistry between Skye and Ward has been one of the show's talking points.



But arguably she already has. Over the course of the season, Skye has slowly found solace in the mismatched group of individuals thrown together on Coulson's modestly named Bus, and in particular the simmering chemistry between Skye and her fellow agent, Grant Ward (Brett Dalton), which has fuelled one of the most interesting character dynamics on the show. However, Bennet favours her rapport with Coulson over any romantic inclinations the character may have towards Ward. "My favourite relationship on the show – and it's a very platonic daughter-father relationship – is Coulson and Skye," reveals Bennet. "I love doing scenes with Clark, and he's so great. On and off screen, he's been really like a father figure to me, because I am super young and my family is in Chicago, so I'm here by myself, and he's been a bit of a mentor."

It's undeniable that the presence of Gregg's Phil Coulson as the headline act is the main draw for millions of viewers on a weekly basis. His avuncular charm, dryer-than-the-Sahara wit and propensity to name-drop a superhero or two has elevated the premise beyond just a diluted sideshow to Marvel's main attractions. "Agent Coulson is the heart," says executive producer and brother of Josh, Jed Whedon. "He was established in the films as just sort of an everyman, so he's the heart of our show and the face of SHIELD – not as this ➤

AGENTS OF SHIELD

The Secret's Out



MARVEL'S SMALL SCREEN FUTURE

Your guide to Marvel's future plans in live-action television

CONFIRMED

DAREDEVIL

The Cabin In The Woods co-writer and director will take the helm of the Netflix series starting in 2015. Daredevil, of course, hails from Hell's Kitchen. Blinded from an early age, he spends his days as crusading lawyer Matt Murdock and his nights as the eponymous leather-clad vigilante. He also looked a lot like Ben Affleck at one point.

JESSICA JONES

An old classmate of Peter Parker's, Jessica Jones is caught in a car crash with a military convoy carrying radioactive materials. Now endowed with super strength and the ability to fly, she becomes a superhero and presumably ends up in Hell's Kitchen.

IRON FIST

A superhero who gained his powers by training in mythical martial arts before killing a dragon and plunging his fist into its heart, Daniel Rand returns to New York as Iron Fist to clean up the streets of crime.

LUKE CAGE

Sent to prison for a crime he didn't commit, he undergoes experiments that leave him with super strength and near-impervious skin, after which he spends much of his time as a private investigator and occasionally teams up with Iron Fist. Idris Elba was once linked to the role, but he's busy guarding Asgard these days.

DEFENDERS

The ultimate endgame for Netflix, the *Daredevil*, *Jessica Jones*, *Iron Fist* and *Luke Cage* series will culminate in a miniseries of the *Defenders*, which will see the heroes join forces to save New York. If successful, the characters could even make future appearances in Marvel movies.

RUMOURED

PEGGY CARTER

Hayley Atwell's spunky WWII spy was a real hit with fans, and ABC is rumoured to be developing a spin-off show dedicated to the character. It makes sense given that, in the short film *Agent Carter*, Howard Stark offered Captain America's squeeze a job in the newly formed SHIELD organisation.

CANCELLED

THE INCREDIBLE HULK

In development with the ubiquitous Guillermo del Toro at the helm, del Toro pitched the idea to Marvel before the character's smashing return in *Avengers Assemble* reignited interest in another solo movie. *Agents Of SHIELD* executive producer Jeph Loeb confirmed that the show has since been canned.





MUST-SEE TV

Agents Of SHIELD



Hopefully the second half of the season will see some form of resurgence.



"I DON'T FEEL LIKE THIS HAS BEEN DONE BEFORE"

CLARK GREGG

➤ big, huge organisation, but really someone who's fighting for the everyman and trying to get in there and save them from stuff they can't control or understand."

WHILE GREGG IS CLEARLY COMFORTABLE IN THE ROLE AFTER FOUR FILMS, TWO SHORTS AND SEVERAL HOURS OF TELEVISION, THE ACTOR STILL HAS SOME TREPIDATION OVER BEING JUST A SMALL PART OF A MUCH LARGER WORLD. "IF I IMPROVISE A LINE, THERE'S

always a danger that I'm going to break the intricate fabric of the Marvel universe," he says. "So I stick pretty close to the script. It kind of works the other way. We walk into a scene or read a script and think, 'Wait a minute. This is connecting to one of the movies. This is going to have a connection with *Thor*!'"

It's clearly important that moving ahead, the show establishes more of a tangible relationship between the events on the small screen and the occurrences in future Marvel movies. To date this has been restricted to canny references, a few props and cameo appearances from Samuel L Jackson and Cobie Smulders as Nick Fury and Maria Hill respectively. Even last year's much-vaunted *Thor: The Dark World* tie-in episode 'The Well' was more entangled in expanded Asgardian lore than the aftermath of the God of Thunder's London smackdown with Malekith. What fans are expecting to see is much larger ramifications trickle down from the big to the small screen, and the producers admit that a greater emphasis will be placed on how the solo ventures of the Avengers will impact the

5 WAYS TO FIX SHIELD

01

KILL OFF CHARACTERS

Joss Whedon specialises in killing and resurrecting characters. He's achieved the latter with Coulson, but we'd like to see the stakes raised.

02

MAKE US CARE

But before the show's writers start offing operatives, we need some development. Was anyone tearing their hair out when Ward was shot? Thought not.

03

NO MORE EXTREMIS

The best things about *Iron Man 3* were Robert Downey Jr, his kid sidekick and the giant bunny. Wrap up the Centipede story and add more espionage.

04

LESS CHEESE

The team are one grin away from group high-fives. Also, we know Marvel is owned by Disney, but naming gadgets after the Seven Dwarfs made us Grumpy.

05

TELL BETTER JOKES

Bring back the biting Whedon wit. The pilot showed promise, but the show slipped up when it included a cliché "He's behind me, isn't he?" non-gag.

world of *Agents Of SHIELD*: "We exist in the movie universe, and so if something important were to happen in *Thor* or *Captain America*, it could reverberate to us. It could relate to us. So we'd have to pay attention to that," explains Jeffrey Bell.

"I just don't feel like this has been done before," agrees Gregg. "I think SHIELD plays a big part in some of the future movies, and I feel like some of the story elements we set up here will connect with those." This will be particularly true of *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, which is set to be the boldest entry in the Marvel canon yet. The thawed-out World War II hero will be embroiled in a Seventies-style political thriller that deals with SHIELD's dubious ethics as a post-9/11 security organisation. Already, *Agents Of SHIELD* has witnessed the characters, including Coulson himself, rebelling against the machinations of his seniors within the administration, and it's clear that the story of *The Winter Soldier* will have massive ramifications on the television series.

In fact, given that Captain America's next outing is embedded so deeply within SHIELD – with Samuel L Jackson and Cobie Smulders reprising their roles, alongside an expanded cast of agents – can we expect Coulson himself to make a triumphant return to the big screen? "I feel like the odds of seeing Agent Coulson in a Marvel film are so much better now that he's not dead," Gregg replies coyly.

Perhaps the more important question, then, and one that has been on the lips of Marvel fans since the show started, is whether we can expect any of the Avengers to drop in on *Agents Of SHIELD* any time in the future? "We have a really smart team of people working on this show, so I think they'd be able to make a movie/TV crossover work in a way that's tasteful, fits and makes sense," reasons Bennet. "Although I'm just saying all of this because I want to have Chris Hemsworth or Robert Downey Jr on set." ☞

Marvel's *Agents Of SHIELD* will air on Channel 4 later this year.



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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BLOOD & THUNDER

SEVEN YEARS AFTER **FRANK MILLER'S CONTROVERSIAL FANTASY EPIC**, WE'RE BACK IN THE WORLD OF GODS, HEROES AND GLISTENING MUSCLE WITH STARS RODRIGO SANTORO AND SULLIVAN STAPLETON FOR BLOODY AND BRASH SIDE-QUEL 300: RISE OF AN EMPIRE...

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL INTERVIEWS STEVE NASH

MADNESS? THIS! IS! SPARTA!" WITH THIS BELLOUED PROCLAMATION/INSTANT MEME, GERARD BUTLER LAUNCHED FRANK MILLER'S RETELLING OF THE 300 SPARTAN

warriors into pop culture history on a tidal wave of blood, slow-motion and six-packs. Zack Snyder's stylised vision of Miller's stylised vision became part of the early 21st Century zeitgeist, catapulting the filmmaker onto the action A-list and making Ancient Greece and its myths a new grab-bag for mega-budget adventures.

Fast-forward seven years, and it's fair to say that we're living in a slightly different world. A lot of the goodwill that came with Miller's renaissance was lost thanks to his reactionary politics in the wake of Occupy Wall Street, so much so that the cinematic crimes of his movie version of *The Spirit* have faded in significance. Snyder has a seat with his name on it in the Hollywood A-list, but has found fanboy controversy of his own thanks to *Watchmen*, *Sucker Punch* and *Man Of Steel*. What's more, the legacy left by *300* consists of nothing but disappointment, with *Clash Of The Titans*,

Immortals and *Spartacus: Blood And Sand* flailing and failing to recreate the recipe of bombast, abs and blood. Can a sequel to *300* succeed where others have failed?

"This is not a sequel," insists Rodrigo Santoro, who returns as Persian warlord and self-proclaimed god Xerxes. "The word we are using for it is 'companion' film, because it's happening at the same time. That's what I liked about it. It's like a complement to the whole thing; you are integrating moments with those characters from the first film, and you are helping the audience to understand the scope and the size of the whole thing. We are talking about barbarian times. We are talking about millions of soldiers, armies that are huge, massive."

The core of *300's* concept was that a few stood against many, a point that was difficult to ignore given how often it was reiterated. How do you make a follow-up that doesn't diminish the power of their efforts, while still creating an action movie that's as epic and thrilling? The script (written by Snyder and his *300* collaborator Kurt Johnstad) relocates the

focus to the naval battle fought at Artemisium. As Leonidas and his 299 men dined in hell, conflict was erupting elsewhere, too. "So while they were battling at Thermopylae, the navy was at sea, so the battle was raging all over the place," explains Santoro. "I think the film follows the language of the first film, but it's a fresh story, with new characters and a completely different battlefield."

It may have been a good few years since Snyder's testosterone injection, but it's hard to forget the impact that the first film had on popular culture, as *300* made \$70 million in its opening weekend from a \$65 million budget. Snyder wrote the script for *Rise Of An Empire*, but was a little too preoccupied by a certain superhero to take the reins of the sequel himself. However, his fingerprints will be more than evident on the final product. "He was doing *Man Of Steel* at the time, but he was very involved, always," explains Santoro. "At the very beginning of the process, we talked a lot when he was putting together the script. I think this project is like his son, so he cares a lot about it. But he was committed to *Man Of Steel*, and ➤

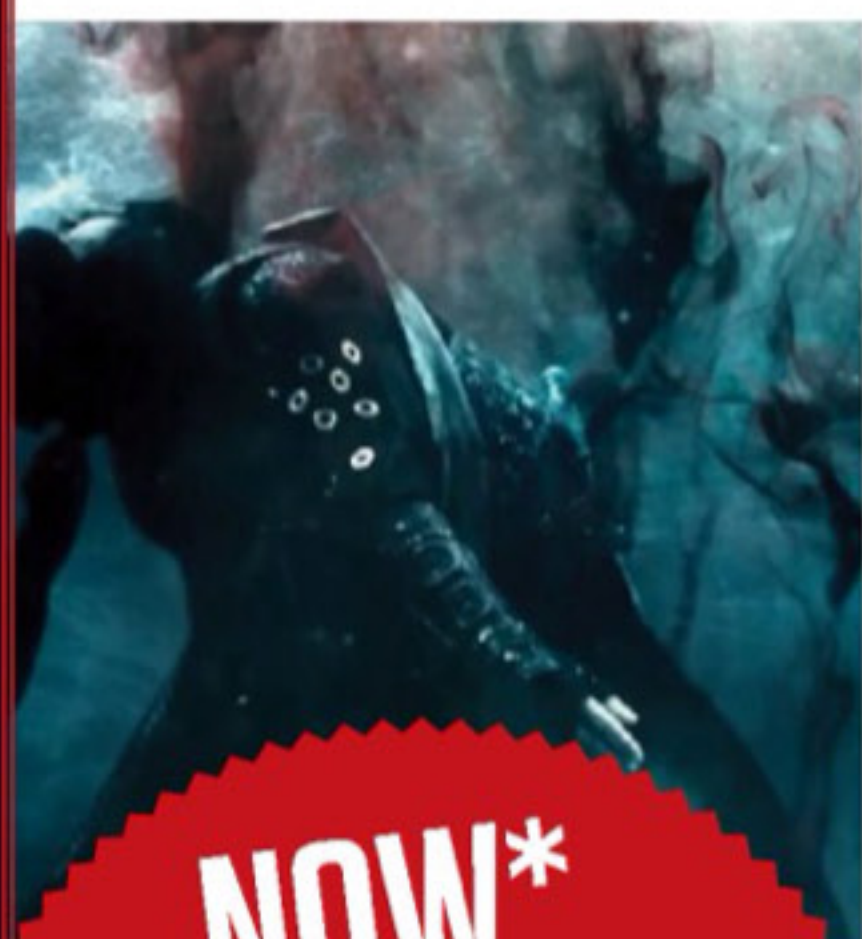
300: RISE OF AN EMPIRE

Blood And Thunder



“FRANK MILLER
PROBABLY HATES ME,
BUT I DON'T READ
COMICS – NEVER
HAVE, NEVER WILL
SULLIVAN STAPLETON

”



“MY SEX SCENE WITH EVA GREEN WAS BASICALLY A NAKED FIGHT”
SULLIVAN STAPLETON

that was such a huge project, so he couldn't direct this one.”

Instead, director Noam Murro took charge of his first blockbuster feature (his previous credit is 2008's quirky Dennis Quaid/Ellen Page indie *Smart People*) to bring the bloodshed to life. Rising star Sullivan Stapleton steps into Gerard Butler's battle-pants to play Themistocles, the Athenian general who suddenly finds himself facing the overwhelming numbers of Xerxes' navy. When we talk to the Australian star of *Animal Kingdom* and *Strike Back*, he tells us that he has very fond memories of watching that first film.

“I'm a boy,” Stapleton tells us. “It's just dudes going to battle. That's it. It's a great story for me. Those guys are going to go and kill those guys. Awesome. 'Let's start walking, then... fight. End film. Good.' I loved the look of it too. When that came out, there was nothing like that. That amazed me. The fact that the whole cast – and your lead man – dies... I think that is fucking awesome. 'We've got this great film, and everyone is going to die.' 'What about the lead guy?' 'Yeah, he's going to die too.' That hadn't been done. And for Hollywood to do that, I was like, 'Awesome. This is good.'”

WITH LEONIDAS AND HIS MEN LITTERING THE HOT GATES WITH THEIR IMMACULATE CORPSES, 300: RISE OF AN EMPIRE CHOOSES NOT TO SPEND ALL

its plot on the Greeks. The new film is based on Miller's comic *Xerxes* and, although it's still unfinished at time of writing, the decision to aim the spotlight at the Persian god-king is all his. While Stapleton provides the square jaw and the lion's roar, perhaps the most intriguing aspect from a narrative point of view is seeing how and why – and this is one of the major areas that the world of *300* leaves history behind – Santoro's character makes

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300: RISE OF AN EMPIRE

Blood And Thunder



Rise Of An Empire takes place during and after the events of 300.

the transition from a man to a god. In *300*, Xerxes is a relatively simple antagonist. We know what he wants and we know that he's an intimidating presence. By delving into his past and sparring with new allies and enemies, Santoro is able to flesh out what had previously been a pantomime villain.

"That was one of the reasons I did it: I thought it would be interesting to come back and revisit this character after six years," explains Santoro. "I have never done that before. I have changed, so I thought it would be interesting to re-approach a character that I played so long ago; and I have to play the same character, because it takes place at the same time. It's not like I can come up with a new take on the character. That was a challenge. Also, in this one, I thought it was interesting, the idea of exploring his back story more, and how he became the mythology god-king with the two new characters: Darius, his father the great king, and Artemisia."

The character of Artemisia is one of the main reasons to get excited about *300: Rise Of An Empire*. A cunning manipulator and fearsome warrior, Artemisia is the one who sets Xerxes on the path to war. While Xerxes takes on the image of a god, Artemisia is the one with the swords in her hands, cutting down everyone who stands in his way. There's really only one actor to play this character and, luckily for everyone involved, Eva Green was available. The *Casino Royale* star is arguably the best example of an actress shattering the Bond Girl myth, having established herself as one of the most talented and hypnotically watchable actresses currently working. As Artemisia, she's both brilliant and deadly.

"She was great," remembers Santoro. "She is very talented, and she had a very clear idea of who her character was. We talked a bit about their back story and the relationship between the two of them, then we rehearsed a little bit. I was trying to find little details, subtle things: how do we create this relationship with Artemisia? How is that triangle with the father? She was the one that got the admiration as the warrior, and that was hard for Xerxes. So how do we play that? How do we play that strength, because Xerxes was a very strong man? It was more about how to juggle the power trip between the two of them. He is the god-king, but she is the one behind him who tells him what to do, manipulating him, and how we make that more ambiguous, because it's not one-sided. It's not that it is just her manipulating him; it is much more complex than that. I think they complement each other."

THE MANIPULATION CULMINATES WITH ARTEMISIA CONVINCING XERXES TO GO THROUGH HIS TRANSFORMATION FROM MAN TO DEITY. THEY'RE BOTH DESPERATE

for conquest, but she needs him to become a figurehead to do so while she uses her two swords to cut bloody swathes through the Greeks at the head of his navy. "The transformation scene, which was something that was discussed very early on in the process, had to be stylised, but we had to make that something that meant something for the character," remember Santoro. "I think it's a complete act of courage and commitment from Xerxes. It's death and a re-birth. They are both very strong. They have different kinds of courage and strength. He is a strategist, she is raw and wild. But ➤





BIG MOVIE

300: Rise Of An Empire



➤ they need each other. They have a weird love and hate relationship, and it reflects a lot about Xerxes, especially when she says, 'Don't forget who put the crown on your childish head.'"

RAW AND WILD SEEMS LIKE THE BEST WAY TO DESCRIBE THE FILM'S SOON-TO-BE NOTORIOUS SEX SCENE BETWEEN ARTEMISIA AND THEMISTOCLES. THE

mortal enemies engage in some steamy activity that turns into something resembling a brawl. "That was unlike any sex scene I've ever done, and I hope I never have to do that in real life," laughs Stapleton. "It's a fight, really, with some sexy foreplay, but it was a great scene to shoot. Sex scenes are always hard and can be awkward, but doing it with Eva was easy. And it was a great dance, it was a great fight. To me, it was basically a naked fight, made easier by doing it with such a talented co-star."

This being a *300* film, there's plenty of (mostly) clothed fighting to go with the naked kind. "We had a lot of fun," Stapleton remembers. "It was a bunch of blokes running round in skirts with swords, so we had a lot of fun. In one of the battles, they chucked us in two foot of mud – they just covered the floor of this set with this really sticky mud – and we were wearing sandals, so it wasn't the best attire to fight in, but no one got hurt. I think I dropped a stuntman. I fucked up one of

the throws, but they are tough buggers, so he didn't get too badly hurt."

A big reason why no one got too badly hurt is that the actors had been well-trained beforehand. The brutal work-outs that the film's stars were put through were almost as well-known as the movie itself, and there was no way that the cast of the new film was getting away with slacking off. Stapleton may have thought that he was in good shape thanks to playing a special forces operative in his TV show *Strike Back*. Evidently, the professionals at Gym Jones had different ideas. "Apparently not," he laughs. "It's a different kind of fitness. I am bigger in the show. They really slimmed us down. Seeing the first one and seeing Gerry [Butler], I thought I would actually have to get bigger, but it was the exact opposite, which was unfortunate because that was the hard part: slimming down, not eating and still training – for me, anyway. I like food and red wine, which is no good for a diet. But you get through it, and the results are... well, I found out I had a six-pack under there."

Indeed, Stapleton tells us that getting the Greek physique was the hardest part of the filming. "There were big days, long days, and I talk a lot in this film.

There are some huge scenes that went on for days, but it was probably the working out. The regime was intense. I was filming *Strike Back* in



Sullivan Stapleton takes the lead as Spartan warrior Themistocles.



THIS IS SPARTA, RIGHT HERE

Where to go to find Greek myths and legends

1. MINOTAUR

Crete

The Greek hero Theseus entered the monstrous Minotaur's maze, using string to ensure he could find his way back, and slew him with the sword of Aegeus.

4. THE GOLDEN FLEECE

Thessaly

Jason and his group, known as the Argonauts, set out to find the golden fleece in order to return it to Thessaly, at which point Jason will become the rightful king of Iolcos.

2. 300

Thermopylae

The Spartan forces held the Persian invaders at the Hot Gates of Thermopylae, using the narrow pass to bottleneck their enemies and slaughter them for as long as they could.

5. THE HYDRA

Lake Lerna, Peloponnesus

As part of his nine labours to atone for the murder of his wife, Hercules must slay the Nine-Headed Hydra, cauterising each stump to make sure the heads don't grow back.

3. THE TROJAN WAR

Troy

The Greek forces sailed for Troy when Helen fled her marriage to the Greek King Agamemnon and eloped with Paris, leading to a siege that lasted for ten years.

6. THE GODS

Mount Olympus

The home of the Gods is situated near Thessaly, where the 12 gods used to gather to argue and debate the best way to torture, challenge or seduce their mortal subjects.

300: RISE OF AN EMPIRE

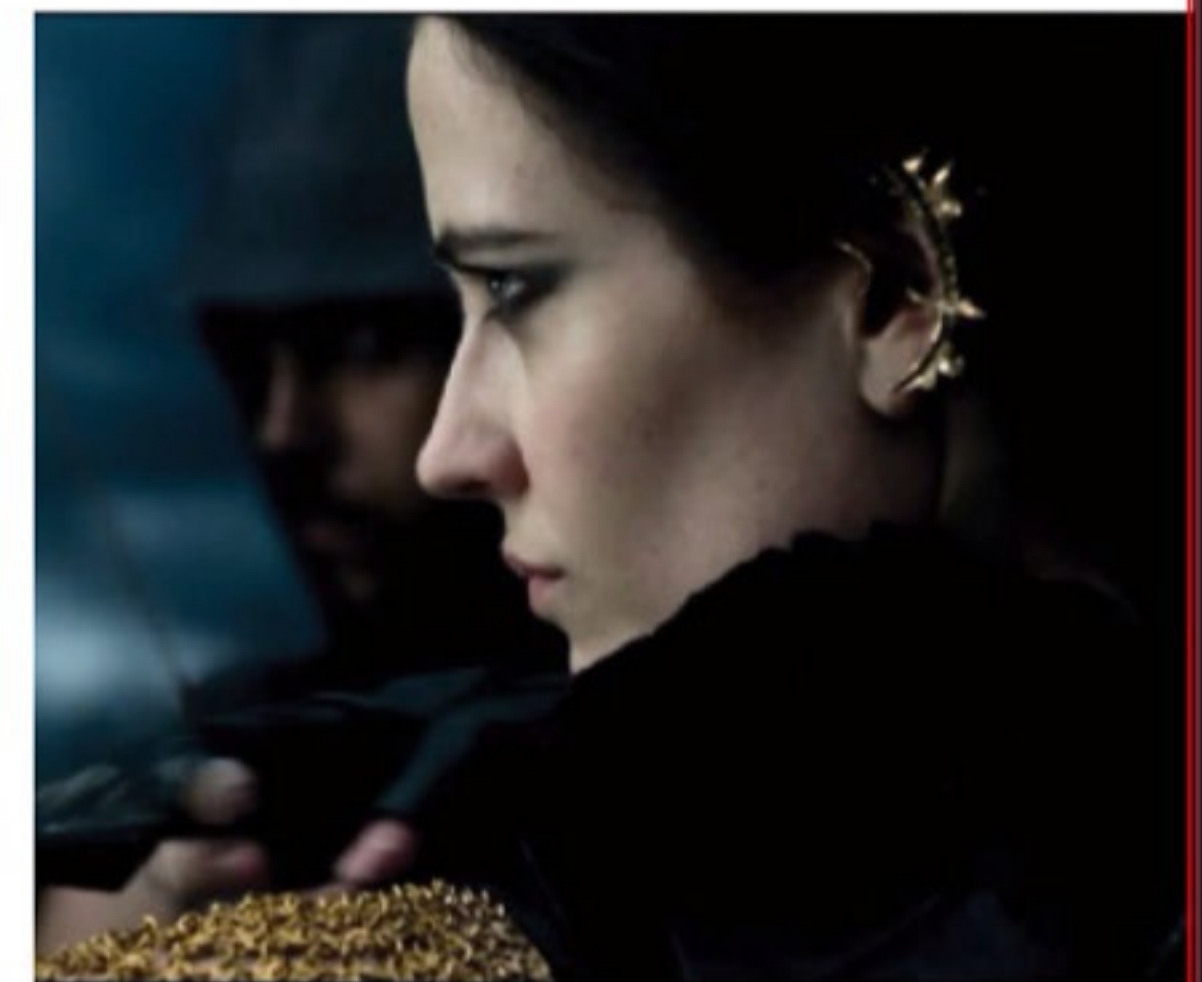
Blood And Thunder



“THE FACT THAT THE WHOLE CAST DIES IN 300... I THINK THAT IS AWESOME”
SULLIVAN STAPLETON



The film will be centred around Xerxes, the original film's big bad.



Africa, and they sent someone out there, probably 10-12 weeks before we got to Bulgaria. It was full on. I would do ten hours on the show, finish that, then do an hour and a half with swords, then an hour and a half in the gym. Every day.”

Although his role as Xerxes requires less flying through the air while waving a sword, Santoro faced a similar challenge when getting into shape. There can't be many more intimidating instructions than being told that you need to look like a god, which meant ice cream was off the menu. “Because it's a god-king figure, so you had better look like a god-king. It's not vanity; it's required for the character. I was very skinny filming a Brazilian thing for TV, so I just had to build up muscle. That was three months of work, but just eating properly and building muscle. This time, I was just not in shape, I was not working out at all, so it took me a little while. This is all about discipline. It is about everyday work.”

WITH ALL THAT TIME IN THE GYM, IT'S A WONDER ANY OF THE ACTORS HAD TIME TO RESEARCH. SANTORO DECIDED TO GO DIRECTLY TO THE SOURCE, ALTHOUGH

he's anxious to reassure us that *300: The Rise Of An Empire* isn't making any lofty claims to historical accuracy. “First of all, we have to make clear that this is 100 per cent based on the graphic novels, so there's no misunderstanding,” he grins. “The film is inspired and comes from the graphic novel, from that mythological world and characters. My character is a mythological figure. But I did study a lot of Herodotus, the historian, both for the first one, and then I went back this time. I just like to feed myself with the atmosphere and with what's going on. So just to understand the size of it, I like to read everything I can. The information helps me to visualise it as well. Herodotus wrote it, but who knows exactly what happened. There is no footage! It's something we believe, but it was written so long ago.”

Stapleton, on the other hand, tells us he won't be diving into Miller's comic-books any time soon. “I feel bad! Frank Miller probably hates me, but I don't read comics. Never have, never will. If I read, I read a book. No offence to geeks out there. I feel so bad, because everyone asks me about it, and I just think, ‘Shit.’ Frank Miller is probably sitting there thinking, ‘Who the fuck is this kid?’ But he is obviously very talented.”

Indeed, he would rather stick to heroes of the mythological kind than the ones in the pages of Marvel or DC. “That seems to be the way it is all going, but no,” he laughs. “But the thought of playing Superman? Henry Cavill did a fucking great job, but fuck! That scares the shit out of me, something like that. Then you have Chris Hemsworth doing Thor... those boys are kicking ass. So I will stick to Themistocles and leather skirts.”

300: Rise Of An Empire will be released on 7 March.

MUST-SEE TV
Sleepy Hollow

13

**REASONS WHY
YOU NEED TO BE
WATCHING...**

SLEEPY

HOW AN UNLIKELY UPDATE BECAME THE BEST NEW SUPERNATURAL SHOW ON TELEVISION...

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

IT WAS EASY TO BE SCEPTICAL ABOUT SLEEPY HOLLOW: 18TH CENTURY REDCOAT-TURNED-REVOLUTIONARY ICHABOD CRANE AWAKES IN THE MODERN DAY, TEAMING UP WITH THE LOCAL POLICE TO STOP THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN FROM BRINGING ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD? NOW, THOSE VOICES SOUND PRETTY LONELY. THE REST OF US HAVE JUMPED ON BOARD WITH SLEEPY HOLLOW'S MIX OF SCARES, LAUGHS AND FULL-ON MADNESS, ENJOYING THE MOST ENTERTAINING SUPERNATURAL show on the air. We've fallen in love with Ichabod (Tom Mison) and his partner Abbie (Nicole Beharie). We want to see more of the Masonic plan to stop the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. We want Ichabod to find a way to rescue his wife Katrina (Katia Winter), a witch stranded in purgatory, and we want to see more of him struggling to grasp 21st Century technology.

SciFiNow talks to Winter about why you should make *Sleepy Hollow* a regular destination, and where Season Two will take us. ➤

HOLLOW



MUST-SEE TV

Sleepy Hollow

REARRANGED PARTNERSHIPS

How would TV's heroes work with someone else getting their back?



DEAN WINCHESTER & OLIVIA DUNHAM

Deprived of his brother, Dean Winchester became even more sullen and withdrawn than usual, sitting in his Impala alone, eating cheeseburgers and listening to classic rock. Used to navigating the moods of difficult men, Olivia surprises her new partner by tackling the paranormal without plunging into depression every five minutes and being a woman in his life who lasts more than an episode. Since he's been confronted with somebody who doesn't consistently let their emotions get in the way of logic, Dean has grown as a person and investigator. He hasn't had to go to Hell or Purgatory in months.



DANA SCULLY & ABBIE MILLS

Lieutenant Mills told her superiors that she was delighted that she would be getting assistance from the FBI as Moloch's evil plan continues to move forward. However, after sharing a similar matter of fact worldview, Agent Scully quickly alienated her new partner after refusing to believe that the creature they had just chased through a fairground was a living golem, telling Mills that there had to be a reasonable explanation for why Andy Brooks' neck looks like that. She also failed to corroborate Mills' story of a headless horseman, as she had been temporarily knocked unconscious.



DALE COOPER & KIERA CAMERON

Agent Cooper reported being delighted to meet Agent Kiera Cameron and, after a visit to the woods to throw some rocks at glass bottles, he came back with a wild claim about his new partner hailing from a futuristic Vancouver. Cameron was understandably reluctant to confirm this, but on her psych evaluation she claims to have learned from his relaxation techniques and that his Tibetan detective skills have been invaluable in helping to put a stop to Liber8. We have advised Cooper not to mention the Red Room, as we are concerned Cameron may think it could provide her with a way home.



MONROE & SAM TYLER

Detective Inspector Tyler arrived in Portland claiming his transfer from the Greater Manchester Police Department was due to being in a coma. Having made sure everyone understood that they were figments of his imagination, he proved extremely capable, recruiting Monroe as his informant. Tyler hasn't stopped telling everyone how ridiculous it is that he's working with a werewolf, even though they became best friends in days. We're sure Tyler will embrace Portland and decide that it's the reality he wants, even if it's not true. Monroe just looks happy to have the company.

1. THE CONCEPT IS INSANE

➤ The pitch for *Sleepy Hollow* might have sounded mad on paper because, well, it was. What was so surprising and welcome about the first episode was how quickly and smoothly all these things made sense. From the opening scene of Ichabod ducking the Headless Horseman's axe to Lieutenant Abbie Mills pulling her gun on the same stumped foe, it was clear that the show somehow had a firm grip on its concept and understood how to make its different elements work together. "I thought either this is going to be an amazing show or it's going to totally not be anything good at all," laughs Katia Winter, who plays Ichabod's wife Katrina. "I thought it would do really well with the fans, but I didn't expect it to do so well with the critics. I thought they would think it was silly and stupid and whatnot, but somehow it just all worked."

2. IT'S GOT SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

If you're missing supernatural procedurals like *Fringe* or even *The X-Files*, *Sleepy Hollow* is the antidote to those blues, but with its breakneck plotting, small-town madness and plenty of big emotional moments, it's also *Twin Peaks* meets *Buffy*. "I think that it has a little bit of everything," Winter enthuses. "I didn't expect it to be funny, and obviously Tom Mison is very funny. Then there's also a seriousness to it and the action and the science fiction and the fantasy aspect of it; it's kind of a mix of all things. I've heard somebody say, 'I'm so happy, finally I've found a show that my boyfriend and I can watch together.' It has some eye candy for all the females, it has the action for the men [laughs], and it has great characters."

3. GRADE-A CHEMISTRY

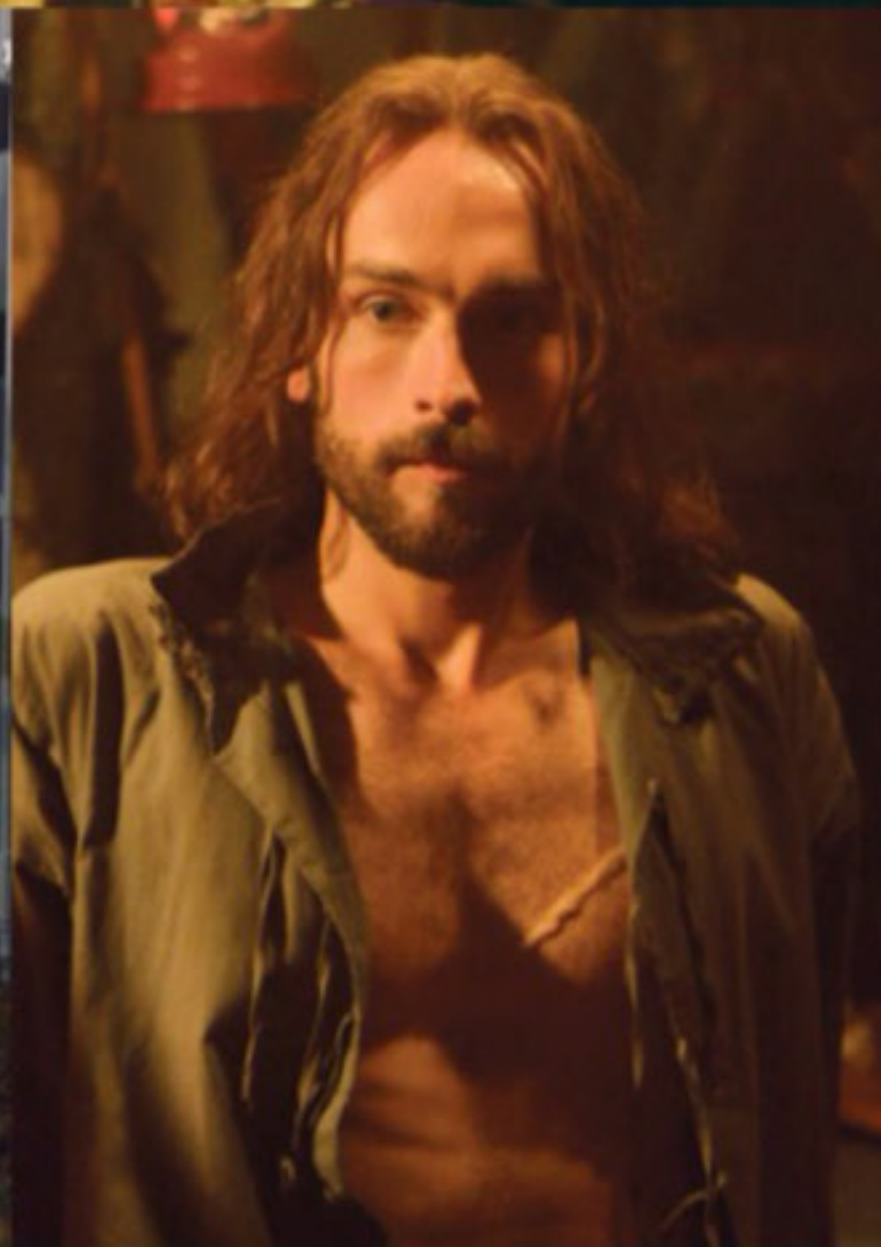
If you're looking for a great TV partnership, look no further than Captain Ichabod Crane and Lieutenant Abbie Mills. From the first episode their chemistry together was immediately apparent, and watching Tom Mison and Nicole Beharie develop their relationship has been one of the real joys of the show. Their back-and-forth is evenly matched, as he bemoans the modern world and she punctures his moral superiority, all the while creating a strong bond, of course. That the whole cast works together as well as they do is even more impressive given that Winter reveals that they didn't have much time together before the cameras rolled. "We met for the first time when we started the shooting the pilot the day before," she tells us. "It could have gone wrong, but luckily we all got along really well, and the chemistry is definitely there."



Tom Mison stars as man-out-of-time Ichabod Crane.



Viewers have quickly taken to the show's unique tone.



SLEEPY HOLLOW

13 Reasons Why You Need To Be Watching



Nicole Beharie rounds off the double act as Lt Abbie Mills.

4. STRONG FEMALE CHARACTERS

While we are seeing more strong female leads, it's rare to find a show that has such a depth of strong, well-written women. The relationship between the two leads is very well-balanced, with Abbie a clever, capable and open-minded co-lead. Similarly, Abbie's sister Jenny (Lyndie Greenwood) has proven to be a fascinating supporting character, and over the course of the season Katrina's strength becomes clear, as we see what she's sacrificed and how important her choices have been. "I remember speaking to [co-creators Alex Kurtzman and Roberto Orci]," Winter tells us. "They love writing strong female characters, and early on in the show I knew that was something that Katrina was going to become, but you don't necessarily understand that in the beginning. It's throughout the season you get to know her more and more, definitely more in Season Two. Then you really get to know her strength. The same with Abbie and Jenny, I really like that. It's about time, I want to see more of that kind of thing."

5. REAL HORROR

You couldn't make a show called *Sleepy Hollow* and leave out the Headless Horseman and his predilection for separating heads from shoulders, and it was great to see the pilot episode enthusiastically continue this tradition. However, it hasn't stopped there. Over the course of the first season our heroes have had to confront a relentless tide of wonderfully designed monsters, from golems to tree demons. "The pilot was quite extreme, and I didn't necessarily think that they were going to continue on that route," laughs Winter. "You know the pilot is usually what catches peoples' eyes, and then they fade, but it's actually escalated! It's becoming more and more intense, and more and more creatures are coming to life, and it's more scary."

"I THOUGHT
EITHER THIS
IS GOING
TO BE AN
AMAZING
SHOW OR
IT'S GOING
TO TOTALLY
NOT BE
ANYTHING
GOOD AT ALL"

KATIA
WINTER

6. FLASHBACKS

These days, you just can't have a supernatural show without some good old-fashioned flashbacks, and *Sleepy Hollow* is currently challenging *The Vampire Diaries* when it comes to putting its characters in 18th Century regalia. As Ichabod pieces together the supernatural circumstances that led to his hibernation and the current apocalyptic threat, we're shown more and more of his and Katrina's life together. "I love it," says Winter. "My sets are so different to everyone else's because it's the 18th Century, so everyone else shoots in modern day times. And I think it's incredible being on set when everyone is dressed in costumes with horses and carriages. It's almost like you're travelling back in time."

7. FAREWELL, YOLANDA

Ichabod is continually finding things about the 21st Century that confuse or irritate him, from the proliferation of Starbucks ("Is there a law?") to the current sales tax ("How is the public not flocking to the streets in outrage? We must do something"). However, at no point during *Sleepy Hollow* has Ichabod's fish-out-of-water romanticism been better conveyed as it was in 'The Lesser Key Of Solomon,' as our man out of time engages in a strangely moving heart-to-heart with the NorthStar security operator as he tries to unlock the car he's trapped in. "I offer this tale, no matter how cruelly he may have treated you, to suggest that you do not give up. Nor give in to anything less than certainty in matters of the heart... It is I who should thank you, kind woman, for unlocking this vehicle from afar, and showing me how the entertainment system operates. Farewell, Yolanda." "Thank you for calling NorthStar Assistance," comes the sobbing response. Fits of giggles covered hearts melting everywhere. ➤



MUST-SEE TV

Sleepy Hollow

8. THE COAT

► Naysayers may sneer about Ichabod keeping his 18th Century clothes, but would you really want to see him without his signature outfit and that glorious coat? "A sign of the apocalypse is skinny jeans," deadpans Ichabod. "He has nothing to hold onto his past, so the clothes symbolise a lot for him," opines Winter. "He's kind of clinging onto them as trying to remember where he came from and who he is. So, a change of clothes? Yes, absolutely. But it would take away so much of his character if he was just to wear just a T-shirt and jeans. I know a lot of people don't like his pants. 'When is he going to take off those pants?' And I'm like, 'What do you mean? They're really sexy!'"

9. NOTHING STAYS DEAD

Death is not the end on *Sleepy Hollow*, and the showrunners know a good guest star when they see one. Clancy Brown's Sheriff August Corbin has resurfaced in flashbacks and dream sequences after taking an axe to the chin in the pilot, providing Abbie with guidance and the show with Brown's inimitable gravitas. Even better, however, is John Cho's Andy Brooks, who recovered from a broken neck to become one of the season's most watchable characters, as the lovelorn former deputy fights his role as Moloch's voice in the mortal realm.

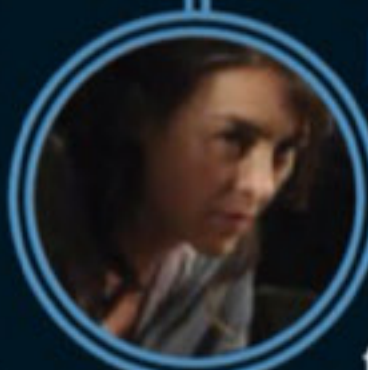
10. GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIBLE

Sleepy Hollow has constructed an alternate history that acts as a framework rather than a be-all-and-end-all. With Ichabod a veteran of the American revolutionaries' high command, he's got all the gossip on the founding fathers. More importantly, the battle he and Abbie are fighting is a continuation of the conflict he already fought, and as the show progresses the links to the past grow stronger. "I heard in the second meeting I had with them that it's not only the book of Revelations; it's going to be a lot more than that," remembers Winter. "There's stuff

Katia Winter, who plays Katrina Crane, is full of praise for the show.

THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

Apocalypses that had to be averted



BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

She may have saved the world a lot, but Buffy's life as a Slayer finally came to an end (on TV, at least) when she beat The First with the help of the Scooby Gang, the Potentials and, most of all, Spike's self-sacrifice. School's out for bloody summer.



SUPERNATURAL

Much like Buffy, the Winchester boys have faced plenty of apocalypses in their time and lived to tell the tale (barring the occasional, well, death). The Four Horsemen themselves made an appearance in Season Five, as Dean and Sam fought their destiny as vessels and Castiel exploded.



ULTRAVIOLET

This short-lived Channel 4 show starred Jack Davenport, Idris Elba and Susannah Harker as a covert British unit fighting the growing tide of vampires (or leeches, to use *Ultraviolet's* lexicon). Grim, well-acted and creative, it all built to a tense finale as Stephen Moyer forced our hero to choose between killing the woman he loves or letting London be overrun.



DOLLHOUSE

Eliza Dushku's Echo fought the apocalypse of her show's cancellation, which she eventually lost, but the dolls did put the world to rights in Joss Whedon's show's two post-apocalyptic flash-forward episodes. The 'Epitaph' season finales were arguably *Dollhouse's* high point.



TORCHWOOD

Much-heralded US/UK co-production *Miracle Day* had star power and a neat concept: what if everyone stopped dying? Unfortunately, the series was a dud: saggy, uninspired and muddled. However, the team did prevent the end of the world, and they gave Gwen all the best bits.



"IT'S BECOMING MORE AND MORE INTENSE AND MORE AND MORE CREATURES ARE COMING TO LIFE"

KATIA WINTER

they weren't able to do for several reasons in Season One; they're saving up for Season Two. There's a lot more stories that they're going to bring to life, so you never know!"

II. ICHABBE? ICHATRINA?

Despite the fact that Ichabod is married to – and very much in love with – Katrina, fans have decided to create a love triangle, with many believing the obvious chemistry between Crane and Abbie should lead to a relationship. "It's there because of the fans!" laughs Winter. "The fans are going crazy about Ichabbe and Ichatrina! Which is fun, it's good to see them so invested! I'm not really sure where I stand; obviously, things could change if I get out of purgatory and we meet again. I hope for the sake of the show that they kind of leave that, at least for a little bit. I like the dynamic between Abby and Ichabod; it's kind of like they're friends, but a little flirty. There's chemistry there, and I think that's way more exciting than if they were to start dating."

12. JOHN NOBLE

With *Fringe* co-creators Alex Kurtzman and Robert Orci working on *Sleepy Hollow*, it was inevitable that the two shows would share some similarities. This was confirmed in the best possible way when the recurring role of sin eater Henry Parrish was given to Walter Bishop himself: John Noble. "He's fantastic," enthuses Winter. "The scenes with John were the most fun to shoot. It makes you a better actor working with good actors, so it's inspiring. He's such a lovely person as well, very down to earth and funny. He tries to crack me up between takes all the time!"

13. SEASON TWO IS COMING

After that pilot, Fox wasted no time in ordering a second season, and we can't wait to see how the show will develop. Given how insane and breathless the first season was, how can Season Two match up? "Season Two is going to be very different," teases Winter. "The purgatory stuff has been so painful, and Katrina has been through so much and she's stuck in this hell, so it's been definitely about time she gets taken out or saved. I've been talking to [producers] Mark Gothman and Alex Kurtzman about my character for Season Two, and there's some crazy amazing ideas. I was blown away when I heard what they were planning to do. I definitely want to see [Katrina] use more magic, because you know she's a witch, but you haven't seen her use any magic really."

Sleepy Hollow is airing now on Universal.

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SPOOKY

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

Have yourself a feast in sp

BURGERS

Ye Olde Timey Burger

\$6.95



Sleepy Hollow

Here in Sleepy Hollow, we've found ourselves educated on a good number of traditions from our nation's past, and visiting professor/detective Ichabod Crane took the time to tell us that hamburgers are German, rather than an American speciality. You'll be relieved to hear we ignored him. The Ye Olde Timey Burger has all your favourite ingredients, including a slice of good old-fashioned cheese, and puts a new spin on a classic recipe with an outlandish addition: headless horseradish.

The Doublemeat Burger

\$7.95



Buffy The Vampire Slayer

Our delicious Doublemeat burger combines beef and chicken. Please note: our new employees sometimes have trouble adjusting to the service industry and invent fantasies to fill the time, such as the idea that the burger is made out of people, or that a lamprey monster disguised as an old lady is devouring their colleagues. We'd especially like to dispel the idea that the Doublemeat burger is actually almost entirely made of vegetables. That rumour is truly the product of a broken mind.

The Buck Stops Here Venison Burger

\$8.95



American Gothic

Named after our town Sheriff Lucas Buck, this burger comes loaded with hot sauce to add some spice to your life. If anything other than your food being hotter than the flames of perdition is bothering you, all you have to do is ask, and we will make your problems disappear. We only ask that one day, you do us a favour. Sheriff Buck would like to remind patrons that troublemakers will not be tolerated. Furthermore, pay no mind to the ghost of Caleb's sister Merlyn. No one's at the door.

Merlotte's Double Cheeseburger

\$8.95



True Blood

If you're coming off a January diet and feel like getting your teeth into something truly calorific, Merlotte's Double Cheeseburger is for you. It's packed with top-grade beef from around the world, smothered in cheese and drowning in sauce. It may be delicious, but don't have it every day, or your life expectancy will be shorter than those of our waitresses! Head chef Lafayette Reynolds has asked us to point out that he knows his food is delicious, but that doesn't necessarily make him a witch.

DINER

When it comes to creating a truly great supernatural small town to set your show in, you've got to have the perfect recipe. Bring your appetite as we examine how your favourite shows serve up their nightmares...

Spooky small-town America

SOMETHING DIFFERENT



Catch of the Day

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Dark Shadows

If you're not in the mood for a burger, why not try a (slightly) healthier option? In Collinsport there's always something fishy going on, which is why we recommend our catch of the day. Our chefs only choose the very best of what

the bay has to offer, and we take great care to avoid the waters near the Collins residence, owing to the unusually high number of corpses to be found there. We would advise visitors not to linger too long over their dinner; it gets misty at night, and a good few tourists have met sticky ends.

WHY NOT ADD A SIDE?

The Loyal Order Of The Corn-on-the-cob

\$3.95



Eerie, Indiana

Fancy a side with your meal? No problem! Just sign up to join our not-at-all-sinister masonic lodge and become a member of the Loyal

Order Of The Corn. Pay tribute to the forces that allow the continued growth and prosperity of Indiana's favourite produce, and please ignore the intergalactic video zapping portal kind of thing.



ROOM FOR DESSERT

Cherry Pie

\$6.95



Twin Peaks

Twin Peaks' famous Double R Diner is where everyone goes for a break from their chaotic and confusing lives. You'll find plenty of local characters enjoying our signature damn fine coffee,

which we'd suggest taking as black as midnight on a moonless night. If you fancy a snack with your coffee, why not treat yourself to a slice of delicious cherry pie? It comes highly recommended by our local law enforcement and everybody's favourite visiting FBI agent, Dale Cooper.

Need A Room For The Night?

If you're passing through and in need of some shut-eye, we'd recommend the newly opened Bates Motel. This adorable mom-and-son operation is very quiet, the mattresses are changed regularly, and Norma Bates would like to remind everyone in White Pine Bay that she was officially cleared of that nasty business with Keith Summers. And Deputy Shelby. And she doesn't know where Jake Abernathy is...



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**“IT’S MOSTLY
HAND-TO-HAND
DEATH BLOWS
AND SNAPPING
PEOPLE’S NECKS”**

THEO JAMES



WHY SHAILENE WOODLEY'S **DIVERGENT** IS ANYTHING BUT DIVISIVE

OPPOSITES ATTACKED

IF YOU DON'T FIT INTO ONE PERSONALITY TYPE THEN KATE WINSLET WILL HUNT YOU DOWN IN THE FUTURISTIC FILM **DIVERGENT**. WE TALK TO THE ON-SCREEN LOVERS OF THIS HOT NEW FRANCHISE, AND DISCOVER IT'S NOTHING LIKE THE HUNGER GAMES, BUT IT MIGHT JUST PROVE AS POPULAR...

WORDS JODIE TYLEY

THERE HAVE BEEN COUNTLESS CHALLENGERS TO THE HUNGER GAMES' CINEMATIC SUCCESS, BUT THIS LATEST UPSTART COMES FROM THE VERY STUDIO THAT PRODUCED IT. NOT ONLY IS LIONSGATE HOME TO THE J-LAW STARRER; IT'S ALSO responsible for the *Twilight* saga, and whatever you think of Bellward and their billion-dollar-making brooding, these are two formidable young adult franchises. So the decision to adapt Veronica Roth's futuristic novel *Divergent* comes with a degree of credibility and, more importantly, expectation. You'd be hard pushed to find a 'kick-ass heroines' list that doesn't feature central protagonist Tris Prior, so the fanbase is already in the bag. It's the kind of role that transforms indie starlets into polished actors that accept Oscars, even if they do trip on the way to the podium. This prospect almost scared actress Shailene Woodley into turning down the role but, much like her character, she took a brave leap.

In *Divergent*, inhabitants of this futuristic Chicago must take a personality test that determines their place in society and ensures continued harmony in this apparent utopia. There are five so-called factions, and each one is dedicated to the lifelong development of a particular virtue: honesty (Candor), intelligence (Erudite),

selflessness (Abnegation), peacefulness (Amity) or bravery (Dauntless). But Tris (Woodley) embodies a bit of everything and, to her examiner's horror, she's branded 'Divergent'. If the authorities discover who she really is then she's as good as dead, so Tris leaves her family of do-gooders behind in Abnegation and signs up to the most fearless faction, Dauntless, in a bid to blend in. "I really admire Tris' sense of selflessness," says Woodley on why she was prepared to sacrifice her anonymity for the role. "She grew up with that, and it was ingrained in her from a very young age. That is a trait that we could use a lot more of in the world today. I think that, coupled with the bravery that she's forced to call upon, makes for a really profound, complex human."

Being in the bravery camp means throwing yourself off buildings seven-stories high, grappling with fellow Dauntless members and standing stock-still while knives are thrown inches from your head. What the trailer doesn't show you is that the person hurling the blades is the fanciable but intimidating instructor Tobias 'Four' Eaton (Theo James), who quickly bonds with our heroine. "So basically I just hold Tris' handbag," jokes Brit actor James, who you might remember as the holiday rep that ➤



BIG MOVIE

Divergent

➤ wound up with faeces on his face in *The Inbetweeners Movie*, or as Lady Mary's lover in *Downton Abbey*. In actual fact, he's quite fond of the YA tradition for having the male protagonist in the conventionally female role of love interest and pillar of support. "When you think about Sigourney Weaver in the *Alien* films, she is a feminine but strong central character who's also an action hero, and I don't think that happens enough," he says. "They can carry you through stories like this in a way that maybe a male central protagonist couldn't. You have the strength and vitality of a female character, but you have a stronger sense of empathy because they're more emotionally complex, so I think it's a good ratio and it works especially well in *Divergent*."

The major thing Four and Tris have in common is that they're both *Divergent*, which is revealed in a steamy shirtless scene (James', not Woodley's). But far from a gratuitous spot of abs ogling, Four is showing off his extensive ink – tattoos that depict the symbols of all the factions, simply because he wishes to embody all those qualities. Meaningful tattoos are commonplace among the Dauntless, and Tris even gets a few of her own, including three ravens on her collarbone, one for each family member, which has become a much-emulated design for hardcore fans of the franchise. Just Google it.

FOUR MUST KEEP HIS TATTS HIDDEN, HOWEVER, IF HE DOESN'T WANT KATE WINSLET'S CHARACTER JEANINE MATTHEWS CATCHING WIND OF HIS TRUE DIVERGENT IDENTITY. SHE'S THE MANIPULATIVE LEADER OF THE INTELLIGENT TRIBE, AND WHILE SHE CLAIMS THAT THE DIVERGENTS are a threat to society, it's her schemes that are the real danger to peace on Earth. Four vows to protect Tris, but it's not that easy when she keeps putting herself in harm's way, as James explains: "He sees her as a very strong, honest character

who I think he admires deeply for her sense of bravery and selflessness, which is a theme that carries through to the final book. But then she also really pisses him off, so they have a very fractious relationship."

For Woodley, the romance aspect of the story was one of the main draws: "It's not one of those teenage dramatic relationships where it's love at first sight and she's swooning over him and he's there with her and then he withdraws and she has to chase him," she says. "There's no drama. I feel like it's very personal and realistic to how a lot of relationships are." The 22-year-old knows what it takes to play a love interest, as she was once destined to become Peter Parker's squeeze, Mary Jane, in *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* before the part was cut from the film. But there's no love triangle in *Divergent*, and that's not the only way it differs from other YA projects: "It's very different than the Bella/Edward relationship," she hastens to add. "They're completely on the opposite sides of the spectrum."

From the recent promotional footage, it's clear the pair have such scorching chemistry that the film should come with an 'Extremely Flammable' sign. James remembers the ruthless audition process that landed him the role as Woodley's tonsil-tennis partner: "We had to make love on camera!" he laughs. "It was as easy as those things can be, because we connected pretty quickly. Right off the bat it was clear that side of things was in the bag, so to speak. Four and Tris' relationship is very reminiscent of the book, and all the scenes are honoured." One of the iconic sequences that is getting a lot of buzz is known simply as 'the Ferris wheel scene'. It's where the Four must face his fear of heights (he has four fears, hence his nickname), as he and Tris climb the rundown Navy Pier Ferris wheel during a game of Capture the Flag. "When he's on the Ferris wheel and she says ➤



Fans of the books will be glad to see many familiar moments.



For actress Shailene Woodley, this role represents a leap of faith in a number of ways.





**"I REALLY
ADMIRE TRIS'
SENSE OF
SELFLESSNESS"**
SHAILENE WOODLEY



DIVERGENT

Opposites Attacked



IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Divergent helmer Neil Burger on making the next big thing

What has it been like to work on such a grand scale?

What I liked about it was Veronica [Roth]'s book, obviously. For a director, what's wonderful is to try to create a new world that's set in the future, and create all that visually. But really, what I liked were the human elements of this young woman's journey. Yes, it's based on a young adult story, but I felt like it was a universal story about, 'Where do I belong? Who am I loyal to? What am I really willing to go out on a limb for?' I felt like it expanded out to something much larger, which was, 'How do you keep a society together?' In the beginning, it seems like they've figured it out. They've got this five-faction system, which is kind of a cool idea. Then it all starts to fall apart.

How true to the book is the film?

I think it's going to be very true to the book. Obviously, a movie is a different beast than a book. There are so many characters in the book that have their function and that are beloved, and there are so many great set pieces. There are too many, really, to fit into a movie, but we really worked hard to squeeze them all in and come up with an idea for a movie that was even more fast-paced than usual. There are three villains. Tris has got a whole

set of friends, and then there's her relationship with her parents and with Jeanine Matthews. Obviously, certain things are smoothed out or combined to make one essential, dramatic journey in the movie, where there might have been more turns in the book, but it's pretty faithful, which is exciting.

You've brought a unique visual style to films like *Limitless*. Do you have a specific direction for the visual look of the film?

Yeah, I wanted to do something more real, not raw in a gritty way, but raw in an immediate and intimate way. So one of the things we wanted to do was shoot on the streets of Chicago; we didn't want to do CG skylines or digital landscapes. So I thought, 'It's set in Chicago, and Chicago is this monumental place, why not use that?' So the idea of shooting a movie that's set in the future, but on the streets that are familiar. Even if you think about New York, New York 80 years ago looks like what is it now. The style of the cars were different, but it's still four rubber tyres on asphalt. So I thought it would be cool to shoot it like street photography – but the streets are 150 years in the future – to make it really immediate and intimate with the characters.





BIG MOVIE

Divergent

SORTING THE FACTION FROM THE FICTION

We put the current batch of cinematic YA heroines into the five factions



ABNEGATION (THE SELFLESS)

"I choose to turn away from my reflection, to rely not on myself but on my brothers and sisters, to project always outward until I disappear."

VAMPIRE ACADEMY'S ROSE HATHAWAY (ZOEY DEUTCH)

Rose puts her life on hold so that her vampire charge Lissa can live. Providing round-the-clock protection, she knows she can never have a family of her own as long as she serves as a guard, but she's willing to train hard for the privilege.



ERUDITE (THE INTELLIGENT)

"Ignorance is defined not as stupidity, but as lack of knowledge. Lack of knowledge inevitably leads to lack of understanding."

THE MORTAL INSTRUMENTS' CLARY FRAY (LILY COLLINS)

Her mother tried to keep her in the dark, but Clary figured out the truth about her heritage quickly enough. Her thirst for knowledge meant she was never tempted to bury her head in the sand, especially after discovering the world was really full of demons.

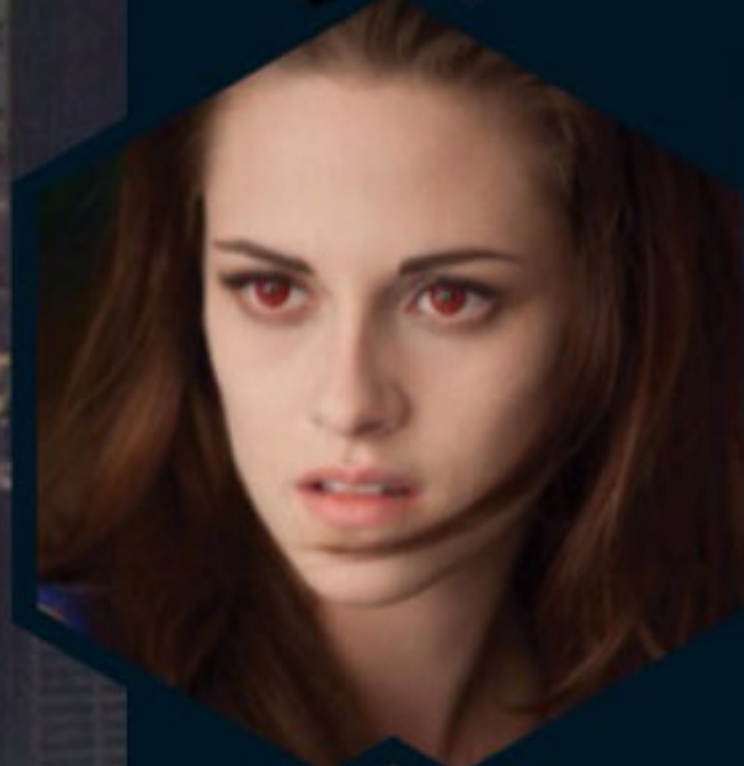


DAUNTLESS (THE BRAVE)

"We believe in ordinary acts of bravery, in the courage that drives one person to stand up for another."

THE HUNGER GAMES' KATNISS EVERDEEN (JENNIFER LAWRENCE)

Long before the Games, Katniss was laying her life on the line by illegally hunting in order to feed her family. But once inside the Arena, her bravery really shines as she fights for her life and that of her fellow contestant, Peeta.



AMITY (THE PEACEFUL)

"Give freely, trusting that you will be given what you need... Do not be angry. The opinions of others cannot damage you... The wrong is past."

THE TWILIGHT SAGA'S BELLA SWAN (KRISTEN STEWART)

Bella fits in with the peace-loving Cullen family, even developing non-violent powers of protection when Edward turns her into a vampire. She even fights her new blood-sucking instincts and only feeds on wild animals, which is only like eating meat, right?

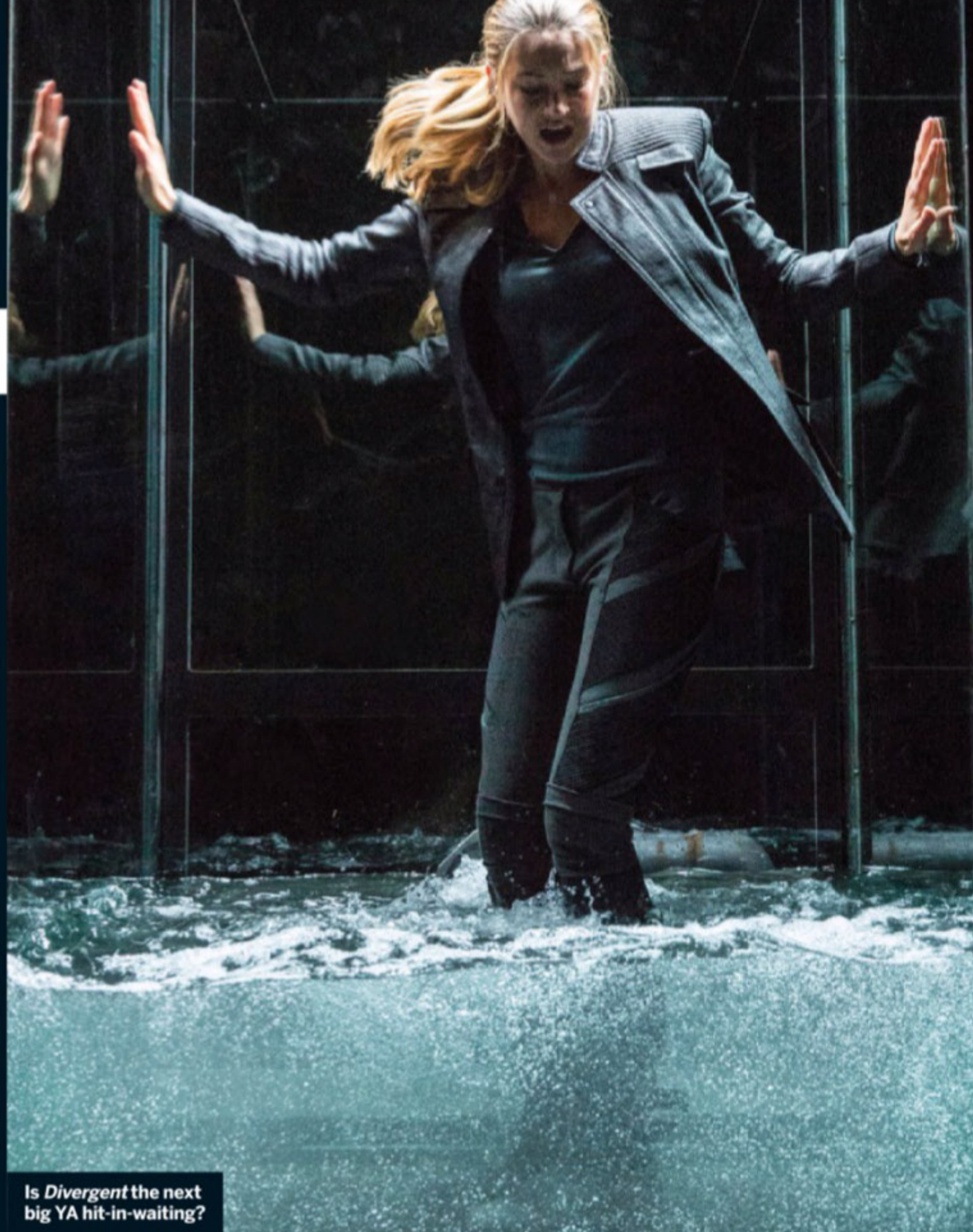


CANDOR (THE HONEST)

"Truth makes us transparent. Truth makes us strong. Truth makes us inextricable."

BEAUTIFUL CREATURES' LENA DUCHANNES (ALICE ENGLERT)

Born to a family of Casters (witches), Lena hates having to hide who she really is. There is one person she can be frank with, however, and she openly admits to him that when her 16th birthday arrives, her powers will be claimed for either the dark or the light.

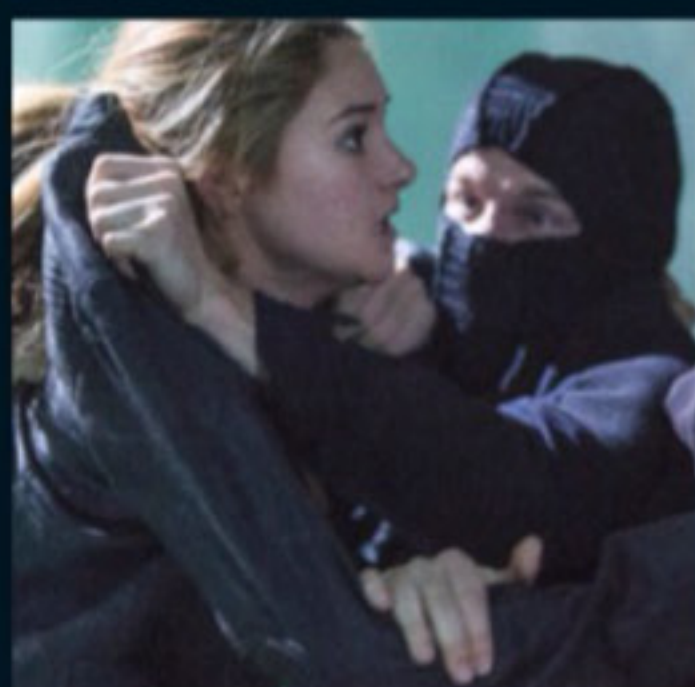


Is *Divergent* the next big YA hit-in-waiting?





Further enhancing the film's credibility is Academy Award-winner Kate Winslet.



**"FOUR AND TRIS'
RELATIONSHIP IS
VERY REMINISCENT
OF THE BOOK"**

THEO JAMES



➤ 'Are you afraid of heights?' and he's like 'Yeah, I'm fucking afraid of heights, but there's a way to get around it,' and then he talks about it. He's at home in his masculinity so that he can be vulnerable."

But we suspect that's not the reason readers are so excited to see this on the big screen, since this exchange is followed by a moment of sexual tension that pays off later with a hair-ruffling, arm-clenching passionate smooch. It's certainly a moment that Woodley will never forget: "The Ferris wheel day was pretty special. It was a night shoot, and we climbed this Ferris wheel for probably 12 hours straight, in the middle of the night. It was also a full moon, and the first super moon of the year. It was so beautiful, to watch it move across the sky. It was just a magical moment in life. And how often do you get to climb a Ferris wheel? You never do."

IT'S VERY FAITHFUL TO VERONICA ROTH'S BOOK, BUT ONE THING FANS COULDN'T FAIL TO NOTICE IS THAT THE CHARACTERS HAVE A FEW MORE MILES ON THE CLOCK. THEY'RE NO LONGER BRIGHT-EYED TEENS, AND 29-YEAR-OLD JAMES FEELS THIS WORKS IN THEIR FAVOUR: "I THINK IT raises the bar and increases the stakes a bit," he says. "The casting directors had looked at a lot of dudes, and what they needed from him was a sense of masculinity that only really comes a little bit later, so maybe that's why it helps to be older. It works in my favour, particularly because I felt that for him to be a proficient warrior with such a strong sense of self, as well as being one of the toughest and experienced guys in Dauntless, then two years was a very short amount of time to achieve that. So I was hungering for him to have had a bit more experience." This experience in the field paves the way for plenty of action scenes. "It's pretty full-on and violent," he adds. "It's mostly hand-to-hand death blows and snapping people's necks."

On top of physical violence, the Dauntless faction must also endure emotional trauma if they want to pass the final stage of the initiation process. They're forced to enter 'fear landscapes,'

which is a simulation that draws on their deepest anxieties. The scenarios are different for everyone, and the imagery used can be both literal and symbolic.

"Tris gets pecked by crows," reveals Woodley. "That's pretty terrifying. I would not like that at all. I think that's worse than spiders. I'm not into that idea." But as her character notes in the book, it's not a phobia of birds that has her fighting off the feathered fiends; it's about control. These fear 'scapes were a test for Woodley, too, who hadn't worked with green screen before: "It's way more difficult than human interaction," she admits. "I had to erase my preconceived notions of what I was used to and adapt my style of artistry to the style that this movie lent itself to. Veronica [Roth] created such an amazing world, and then [director] Neil Burger visually brought it to fruition in a way that I could have never imagined it. We're so lucky to be pieces in the puzzle of this dystopian future."

Speaking of the future, the studio behind *Divergent* is banking on a bright one, so much so that Lionsgate is deploying the *Twilight* method of hot-and-heavy filmmaking, with plans to release the next two instalments in the series (*Insurgent* and *Allegiance*) in March 2015 and 2016. This means that production on the sequel will begin while Burger is still in post-production on the first film, so the search for a new director has begun. This kind of compressed production schedule is what led to Gary Ross bowing out of *The Hunger Games* series after the first movie, but although that's not the only similarity, the other comparisons are equally superficial. "Other than having a female protagonist and the fact it's set in the future, that's where the comparison ends," says James. "It's more a love story between two people and a tale about giving yourself entirely to a concept, to a vision of the world that you believe in." It may be a case of *Divergent* by name, divergent by nature, but there's no doubt the odds are firmly in its favour. ☞

Divergent will be released on 4 April.



BRINGING SEXY DARK

LAURA VANDERVOORT REVEALS ALL ON TV'S SAUCIEST NEW SHOW



The *Smallville* star will be playing fantasy favourite Elena Michaels in *Bitten*.

After winning over geek hearts in *Smallville* and *V*, small-screen icon Laura Vandervoort is breaking hearts centre stage with *Bitten*, based on Kelley Armstrong's hit urban fantasy series. We talk to the star about getting naked and battling like a beast...

WORDS EDWARD GROSS

IF TV SHOWS AND MOVIE DEALS CAME IN THE CORRECT ORDER, TWILIGHT WOULD HAVE BEEN RESOUNDINGLY DISMISSED AS A BITTEN IMITATOR. IF LEADING ROLES CAME IN THEIR

correct order, too, Laura Vandervoort would have been at the head of the pack long before now, but they're breaking out together. The *Smallville* fan favourite is top dog, playing Elena Michaels in the small-screen adaptation of Kelley Armstrong's *Women Of The Otherworld* series.

She's a woman living in Toronto, Canada, who is the only female werewolf in existence. Having left her pack years behind to try and pursue something resembling a normal life, she finds herself drawn back to that world in order to help

her pack's Alpha solve a series of murders, which is complicated by the fact that the Alpha's son is also her former lover.

For Vandervoort, *Bitten* is an opportunity to put herself front and centre in a genre show, having previously recurred as Kara Zor-El (aka Supergirl) on *Smallville*, and the Visitor Lisa on the 2009 reboot of *V*. Finding herself drawn to this world from a young age – one of her earliest credits is *Goosebumps* – she feels that this show is the culmination of everything she has been working towards as an actress: a strong yet vulnerable character, and an opportunity for her to show the world what she's really capable of.

When it comes to sci-fi, you're like Al Pacino in *The Godfather: Part III*: every time you think you're out, they pull you back in.

[Laughs] But I'm happy to be pulled back in. *Smallville* was obviously my first chance to experience the genre, and then going to San Diego Comic-Con, I think the fans just got me hooked, because they're so dedicated and knowledgeable. Then obviously *V* gave me a chance to play a very different character, and now with *Bitten* I'm completely hooked. But it's great, because sci-fi usually provides really amazing female leads, which is hard to find sometimes, so I'm always proud to be a part of it.

When you look at the response to *Twilight* and *The Hunger Games*, people make such a big thing about the idea that it proves that a female lead can carry a big-budget film.

I know, and it's like a double-edged sword. I'm really proud we're able to have female leads in films like those, but at the same time it's frustrating that we have to state, "...and it's great because it's a female." I hope we get to a point where it's just a natural thing.

What was it about *Bitten* that made you want to commit to this particular series?

I spoke to JB Sugar, our executive producer, before I signed on, just about the vision that they had about the character and the books, and how they were going to handle the wolves, because that's a huge part of what we're doing, and also the fact that she was going to kick ass and be one of the pack members, almost one of the leaders of the pack. I just thought that was rare and unique, sadly, especially in the werewolf world, where we've always seen males in the leads. I think this is a great change. I read the books *Bitten* and *Men Of The Otherworld* just to get into the background of the character and the stories, and learned a little bit about [author] Kelley Armstrong and the idea of female empowerment. I was sort of hooked at that point, and they let ➤



MUST-SEE TV

Bitten

➤ me be a part of the casting process for the males. There was no doubt in my mind that I wanted to be part of it. And the fact that it's Canadian, I get to support the Canadian part of the industry. So there's no reason why I didn't want to be a part of it, and it's my first lead on a series; I've been working since I was 13, so it seemed like the right time and, obviously, I get to be home by my family while I'm shooting. My sister has just had a baby, so it's amazing to be home and see him grow as well.

When you think of your character, Elena, how do you perceive her?

That's a complicated question, because she's more than one person in a lot of ways. Elena grew up in the foster care system; she never really had a true family or people to love and protect her and vice versa. She had horrible experiences in her foster home that have made her not trust men or connect with

anybody. At the same time she's very strong, very driven and very intelligent, and she just wants to be a part of something and feel like she's got a home.

Once she's bitten and turned into a werewolf, though, she finds herself torn between two worlds, right?

Exactly. No female has ever survived the bite, and the Pack didn't expect her to survive, but she's such a strong woman and does. She makes a decision to go back to Toronto and makes a decision to leave them behind and live a normal life in the city. She gets a human boyfriend who's a photographer, and tries to live what people expect is a perfect life, and have that facade and just suppress the animal within her. Ultimately, she gets called back to the Pack and has to abide by their rules. She has to go back to help her Alpha solve some mysteries and she goes back and forth between both

worlds. Deep down, she loves the fact that she has this family for the first time in the Pack, but at the same time she's this animal that she hates.

Since this is your first series lead, as opposed to a co-starring or guest-starring role, what's the adjustment been like for you?

I don't think there's a real way to prepare for it. I've been working since I was a kid, but never to this extent of being there every day for every scene. I'm a perfectionist and competitive, so I put a lot of pressure on myself to have every scene down and prepare every day, and do my own stunts. So I really push myself more than I have before. I have to say that I love being in every scene. I'm so used to coming in and doing a few days and feeling like I've missed out on what happens on set or bonding with the cast. Now that doesn't happen because I'm there. Even scenes where I'm not working, I'll stay just to watch. The show for our producer JB and me is like a baby. I put everything into it for those six months. It made me more aware of what I could handle more than I ever realised, which was a great feeling.

Which is the trick, isn't it? To come away from any experience enhanced and more self-aware.

Definitely, I think I did. Physically, I did more than I thought I could, but emotionally I've never been as vulnerable or open with a character before. I put personal things I was going through at the time into the character. There were a few times we were doing scenes that were emotional and they'd say



GIRL OF STEEL

Laura Vandervoort owes it all to *Smallville* and *V*

In many ways, being cast in *Bitten* seems like the culmination of a journey that began with her role as Kara Zor-El in *Smallville* and Lisa in *V*.

"I'm so proud of both of them, which I'm lucky to say because a lot of actors can't," she admits. "I'm not proud of everything that I've done, but if we're just talking about sci-fi, which is all of the stuff I'm very proud of, all of the women that I've played I feel in some way have really redeeming qualities. They're strong and opinionated.

"Supergirl is an iconic superhero, and that was an insane experience," Vandervoort elaborates, "but more so because of its impact on young girls who look up to Supergirl. They come to conventions with their dads, which is amazing. I get so many letters and tweets from mothers saying I've given their daughters a role model. That's why I always want to make sure I portray myself properly, and I'm true to who I am and don't give in to the LA industry and nightlife. I've never been interested in that, and have always wanted to be a role model to little girls. Kara definitely played into that."

As to *V*, she notes that it gave her the opportunity to be in the American market. "Lisa grew into a wonderful role," she smiles. "It was originally as a guest star for three days in Vancouver. I ended up staying and became the Queen's daughter. She was a bit of a robot and did what she was told, but then she breaks out of that and develops emotions and becomes this strong woman, and is willing to take on her mother for what's right and to protect the humans.

"So these characters," closes Vandervoort, "have been really redeeming, cool, bad-ass and smart. Nice combination!"



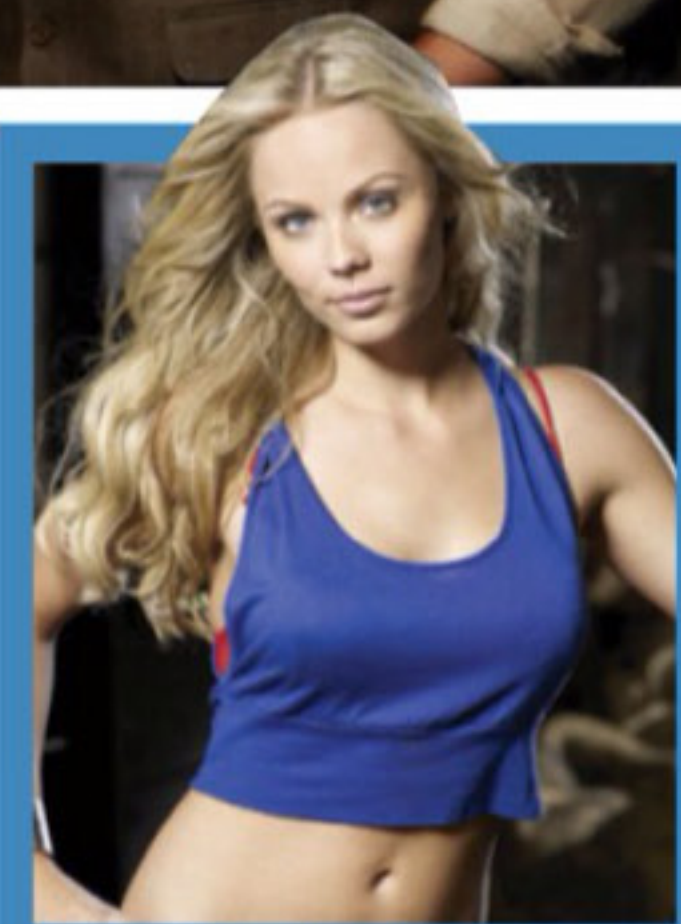
The actress is looking to make her presence known in a previously male-dominated sub-genre.



“I WANTED TO ESTABLISH MYSELF AS AN ACTOR AND NOT JUST BE THE GIRL WHO IS TOPLESS IN SOMETHING”

LAUREN SHULER DONNER

Vandervoort joins a strong ensemble cast in *Bitten*.



SUPER DUPER DELIA

Inspiring a new generation

Laura Vandervoort believes that her portrayal of Supergirl impacted her life in a number of positive ways, not the least of which is the fact that it led her to write a children's book called *Super Duper Delia* that has now been optioned as a live-action TV series in its own right, which she will serve as executive producer and creator of.

Says Vandervoort, "It's about a ten-year-old girl who's quirky, weird, different, wears glasses and gets made fun of. On her tenth birthday she finds out that she's a superhero, and what follows is her just being unique and true to herself. We're casting Delia right now. So Supergirl allowed me to come up with the idea to create a live-action show for girls and boys to have a positive role model who doesn't change to be cool or worry about being like everyone else. She's quirky, smart and sarcastic."

"Cut!" but I didn't stop crying. It was really rough, but at the end of it, when I look back, I was proud I was that open with the crew. They knew what I was going through, and I put that into the character.

In the past, one of the points you very specifically made is that you drew a line at a certain place. You didn't mind playing up the sexy persona or walking around in a bikini, but you would never do nudity and that sort of thing. What changed your mind with *Bitten*?

I don't want to admit it, but I'm closer to 30, and I'm more comfortable with myself and my own skin. *Bitten* is a very sensual series. It's about the animalistic lust for another werewolf, Clayton, and suppressing that. Also, I have a body double, to be honest, so most of it isn't me anyway, which also helps [laughs]. I did a lot of the close-up stuff with the other actors myself, but I did have a body double for wide shots just to be comfortable. As the season went on, though, I was more comfortable with the guys and the crew. I'd be a little more, "You know what? I'll stay in

this shot and it'll be fine." At the beginning it was new to me, and I had to have the backup of a double. Also, I wanted to establish myself as an actor and not just be the girl who is topless in something. Over the years, I've had a chance to play roles that people might take a little more seriously, and now with this character there's so much to her. I just started watching *Homeland* and Claire Danes. I'm not comparing it at all, but she is just so raw, real, comfortable and an amazing actor. In *Bitten*, I play a flawed character like that, and I wanted to be honest with it, and if that means being more vulnerable physically, then I'm happy to do that because it's such a strong role.

Are the fight scenes challenging for you?

Our stunt coordinator, John Stead, is incredible. I actually worked with him when I was a kid, but to work with him now... he's got so much more martial arts experience. We've come up with really cool ways to do fight scenes that incorporate the animal side and the wolf side... you circle your prey,

and don't lose eye contact. If I'm dominant, I grab the person by the nape of the neck, because that's what a mother would do to a cub to show dominance. We're trying to find all of those little innuendos of an animal when I fight.

We started off talking about how you're drawn to genre projects, but it sounds like something that always appealed to you.

Even when I was a kid, I was in *Goosebumps* and *Are You Afraid Of The Dark?* My Disney movie was *Mom's Got A Date With A Vampire*. I've always gone to that world and grew up loving Tim Burton as a child. I've just always been drawn to the darker side. That's not to say I don't like *Clueless* and bubblegum movies with my girlfriends, it's just I find darker films to be more layered and enjoy them. It has always been a direction I've been pulled in; I just jump on board because I love that stuff. ☺

Bitten is airing now on Syfy in the US and Space in Canada.



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★★★★★ Outstanding ★★★★★ Thoroughly entertaining ★★★ Good but somewhat lacking ★★ Fair at best ★ Avoid as you should *Sx_Tape*

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73 47 RONIN

"THIS CONFUSED TALE IS A
WASTED OPPORTUNITY"

TRIVIA THIS IS THE SEVENTH FILM THAT DEPICTS THE 47 RONIN INCIDENT.

FILM INFO

Released

21 March

Certificate

TBC

Director

Caradog W James

Screenwriter

Caradog W James

Cast

Caity Lotz, Toby Stephens, Denis Lawson

Distributor

Content Media

Running Time

90 mins



THE MACHINE

Would you... like to be upgraded?

THE RISE OF THE MACHINES

AI computers in movies

Ash (Alien)



Ash's outing as an android was one of the film's best surprises. Once his true nature was revealed, the game changed, making all of their (and our) nightmares about robots come true.



T-1000 (Terminator 2: Judgement Day)

While Arnold Schwarzenegger's T-800 is arguably more iconic, the T-1000 trumps him for reasons of... well, coolness. Robert Patrick's incarnation isn't just deadly; it's almost unstoppable.



R2-D2 (Star Wars)

If one 'bot could dispel humanity's fears about technology taking over, it's R2-D2. Clever, brave and loyal, he's the only one we'd want to fly into battle alongside.



Roy Batty (Blade Runner)

Clever and complex, with a haunting and very human motivation for his actions, Roy Batty is only set apart from our hero by his inability to articulate and fully experience emotion. This is AI at its most realised – and alarming.

Writer/director Caradog W James'

ambition seems, at first glance, to have paid off with this award-winning slice of indie science fiction. But while it certainly looks the part, does *The Machine* have the substance to deserve such accolades?

At some unspecified point in the future, a cold war with China has left the western world devastated by recession. Britain's last hope lies in the basement of a Ministry of Defence bunker, where brilliant scientist Vincent McCarthy (Toby Stephens, best known as the villainous Gustav Graves in *Die Another Day*) is experimenting on fatally wounded soldiers with a view to building an army of peace-keeping super-soldier android types.

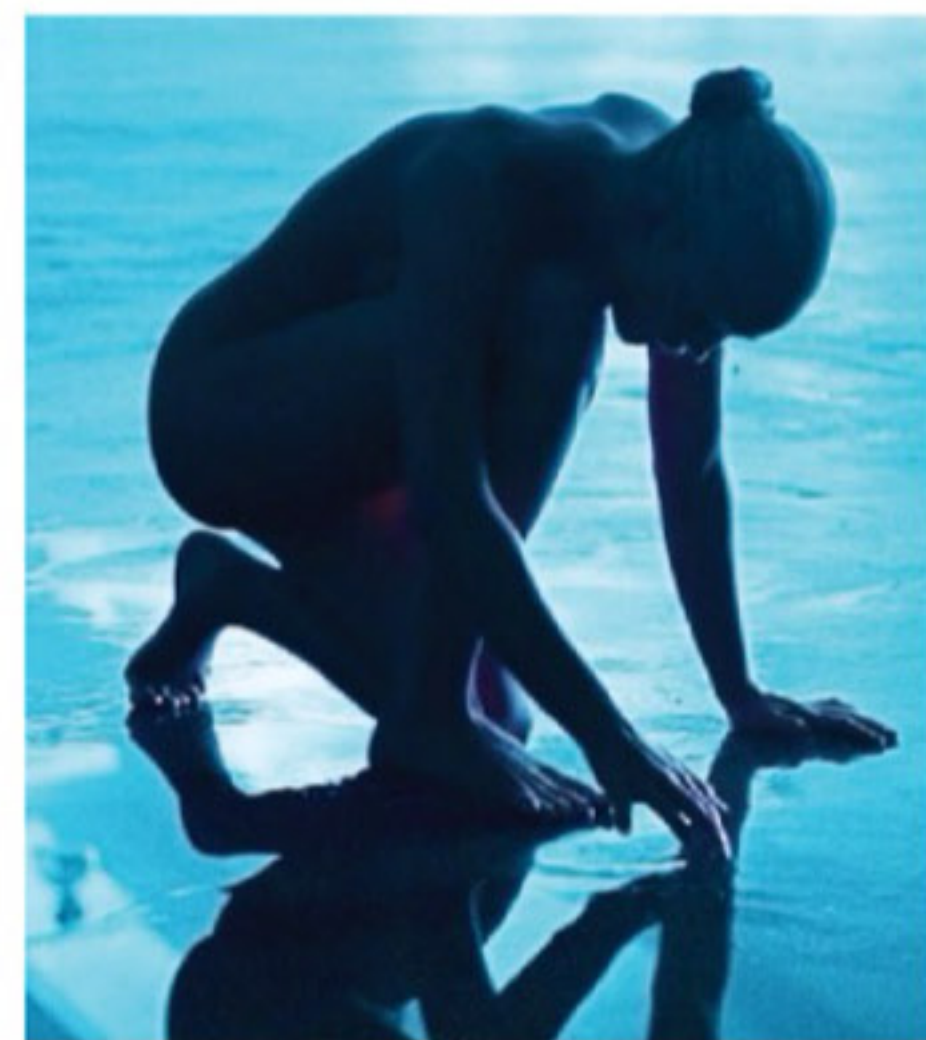
So far, his efforts have failed, with violent and extremely bloody consequences, but he's hoping young artificial intelligence expert Ava (Caity Lotz) could help him save the project... as well as his brain-damaged daughter. Dastardly MoD boss Thompson (Denis Lawson, aka Wedge from *Star Wars*), however, has other ideas; he wants to be the master of "a little angel of death and destruction," and he'll do whatever it takes to achieve that dream.

It's an intriguing premise, and one that's boosted by the film's stunning opening credits, which explore the skeleton of its titular character up close in gorgeous detail. The good news is that the high-quality visual effects continue throughout, from the minimalist MoD sets to the futuristic tech on display, and one particularly beautifully choreographed scene in which we see the android come to life. It's a

great – and extremely pretty – achievement on a low budget.

Very pretty, too, is Lotz, whose leading lady holds the key to fixing Vincent's problems with her "beautiful programming" (a transparent chat-up line if ever we've heard one). But though Ava has some issues with the MoD's potentially nefarious intent for this technology, it's honestly difficult to care. Lotz hands in a decidedly wooden performance, unfortunately further hampered by her character's stilted dialogue – and she's not the only one who suffers from the badly written script.

Given his experience, Stephens handles it rather better, managing to engage some empathy from the audience as his character battles to save the one thing that still holds meaning in his world. Lawson, too, delivers a suitably malevolent, if two-dimensional, villain. But you can practically see the cast's eyes roll as they dish out cringeworthy line after cringeworthy line. At one point, the newly awoken (but never named), wide-eyed Machine tells its maker: "Your hair feels like carpet... and like fur." It seems James is as desperately in need of a sense of irony as his leading man is a decent conditioner. His plot, meanwhile, asks some important questions about morality and humanity, but ultimately casts all the interesting bits aside in favour of wrapping up the movie in a neat, explosive blow. It's a pity, not to mention a missed opportunity.



With references to everything from *RoboCop* to *Minority Report*, it's clear that there's a lot of love for the genre here, right down to the *Blade Runner*-style Eighties score by Tom Raybould. But we've all seen enough movies and *Battlestar Galactica* reruns to know that AI is basically a very bad idea, and this film is no different. Unfortunately, in the case of *The Machine*, the disastrous consequences can't be blamed on the technology.

Cat Collins
VERDICT ★★☆☆☆

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Blade Runner
Ridley Scott's 1982 neo-noir still holds up as an unparalleled sci-fi masterpiece.



47 RONIN Yo La Tengu

Details 12A // 118 mins // Out now **Director** Carl Rinsch **Screenwriters** Chris Morgan, Hossein Amini **Cast** Keanu Reeves, Hiroyuki Sanada, Rinko Kikuchi, Tadanobu Asano **Distributor** Universal



With expensive reshoots, a delay of over a year and having been written off as a financial loss by Universal before it was released, this \$200 million fantasy version of the classic Japanese story emerged under a fog of bad publicity so thick that even Keanu Reeves' star power couldn't break through. It bears all the signs of a film that had no single strong hand at the helm, being muddled, lacking focus and, most unforgivably, dull.

Reeves plays Kai, a 'half-breed' who is found as a boy escaping from the mythical woods in the kingdom of kindly Lord Asano (Min Tanaka). Asano takes him in, but he's never accepted by his samurai; only his daughter Mika (Ko Shibasaki). When evil Lord Kira (Tadanobu Asano) orchestrates the disgrace and execution of Asano, Oishi (Hiroyuki Sanada) and the masterless samurai must take revenge before he takes Mika for his bride. Oishi knows they need Kai, but will he be a match for Kira's witch, Mizuki (Rinko Kikuchi)?



47 Ronin wants to be a blend of samurai drama and action fantasy. One of the film's fatal flaws is that it knows what these two things look like, but can't successfully blend its influences. Instead, director Carl Rinsch delivers an awkward patchwork of clunkily edited sequences that are clearly designed to remind its audience of *The Lord Of The Rings* or *Pirates Of The Caribbean*.

The reshoots placed more focus on Reeves' Kai, but his character development sits at an uncomfortable distance from the main thrust of the story. The po-faced tone also means that he's not really given the chance to develop any chemistry with Sanada.

On the plus side, the Japanese cast are on good form. Sanada oozes gravitas and provides the real anchor for the story. Asano smirks well, but he's outshone by Kikuchi as the shape-shifting Mizuki, whose gleeful scenery chewing is the most fun in the film.

Despite beautiful work from the costume and art department and good turns from Sanada and Kikuchi, *47 Ronin* rarely sparks into life. This confused tale is a wasted opportunity.

Jonathan Hatfull
FILM ★★☆☆☆

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Princess Mononoke
Studio Ghibli's classic is a clear influence on the film's more fantastical elements.



PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE MARKED ONES

Must be the season of the witch

Details 15 // 84 mins // Out now **Director** Christopher B Landon **Screenwriter** Christopher B Landon **Cast** Andrew Jacobs, Jorge Diaz, Gabrielle Walsh, Renee Victor **Distributor** Paramount



The low-budget leviathan that is the *Paranormal Activity* franchise continues with this spin-off set in a Hispanic community in Los Angeles. Jesse (Andrew Jacobs) has just graduated from high school, but his summer takes a strange turn when he and his friend Hector (Jorge Diaz) realise that his neighbour is a witch. After she dies, a supernatural force starts protecting Jesse, but what does it want in return?

One of the biggest challenges with the franchise is how you keep a found-footage series set in peoples' houses interesting after four films. After the resoundingly negative reaction to *Paranormal Activity 4*, writer/director Christopher B Landon makes the very sensible decision to approach the story from a slightly different angle, with a new setting, new characters and broader scope. If you responded positively to the feeling of claustrophobia evoked by the original films then you might be disappointed by this, but it's frankly a relief that Landon allows the film to breathe, as *Paranormal Activity: The Marked Ones* is bigger, broader and more action-packed.

The film works best during its first half, as Jesse and Hector discover

the former's 'guardian angel', engaging in Spider-Man-esque feats of agility and sending a couple of muggers flying through the air. The relationship between the two is convincing, helped by decent performances from Jacobs and Diaz. It's only once the film needs to deliver a sense of menace that things start to fall apart. Landon mounts some great scares, but the more outrageous moments come at the expense of credibility. Similarly, much was made of the series' new mythology, but it still feels under-explored, and a determination to tie it into the rest of the series will make it hard work for anyone who hasn't seen the previous movies.

Despite this, it's good to see a franchise take a chance and acknowledge the need for a fresh approach. If anything, it doesn't differentiate itself enough. It's pacy, fun and rarely dull; if you're looking for a bit of late-night entertainment then you could do a lot worse.

Jonathan Hatfull
FILM ★★★★★

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



The Last Exorcism: Part Two
Covers similar ground and fully commits to the darkness.



DEVIL'S DUE A bump in the night

Details 15 // 89 mins // Out now **Directors** Matt Bettinelli-Olpin, Tyler Gillett
Screenwriter Lindsay Devlin **Cast** Allison Miller, Zach Gilford, Sam Anderson, Roger Payano, Vanessa Ray **Distributor** 20th Century Fox



It might be the most natural thing in the world, but there's also something pretty terrifying about pregnancy. The idea of a creature growing inside a person's body, sapping their resources and affecting their emotions, is the stuff of pure horror, so it's not surprising that there are plenty of movies where babies are portrayed as evil little monsters. *Devil's Due* is the first to combine that story with the found footage format, but that's the only scrap of originality it possesses.

Sam (Allison Miller) and Zach (Zach Gilford) are enjoying their honeymoon when they meet a friendly taxi driver who wants to show them the sights. The party he takes them to lives up to his hype, but their all-seeing video camera captures a glimpse of something more sinister behind the scenes. Back home, Sam discovers she's pregnant – despite being on the pill – and the couple begin to rearrange their lives in preparation for

the new arrival. But Sam's isn't a normal pregnancy, and Zach isn't the only one filming her.

The challenge for any found-footage horror movie is finding a reason for characters to keep filming, even when things get scary. *Devil's Due* can't, so it cheats by cutting away – to other people's video cameras, police cameras, even CCTV cameras. But in doing so, it undermines its conceit. The intimacy between the audience and characters is broken; Sam and Zach are a likeable couple with a believable relationship and great chemistry, but the more the tricky camerawork distances us from them, the more generic the film seems.

Although the storyline runs along tracks laid by *Rosemary's Baby*, the final act is pure *Paranormal Activity*. The rumbling demonic noises, the ominous night-vision scenes, the strategically placed house-cams: we've seen it all before. Although found footage, in theory, allows for many different kinds of stories, it has become a depressingly tired sub-genre with far too many in-built clichés, and *Devil's Due* regurgitates them all. It's just boring.

Sarah Dobbs
FILM ★★☆☆☆

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Rosemary's Baby
 The definitive devil-baby movie is claustrophobic and very, very creepy.



SCREENING
Must see now!

THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER The big bad wolf

Details 12A // 93 mins // Out now **Director** Charles Laughton **Screenwriter** James Agee **Cast** Robert Mitchum, Shelley Winters, Lillian Gish **Distributor** Park Circus



So many of horror's boogeymen wear their monstrosity for all to see. Robert Mitchum's smiling, sermonising Reverend Harry

Powell is an obvious precursor to many of these nightmares, from *A Nightmare On Elm Street*'s Freddy Krueger to *Cape Fear*'s Max Cady. "Don't he never sleep?" cries young John Harper (Billy Chapin) as he spies Powell on the horizon. The murderous preacher will never stop until he gets what he wants.

Charles Laughton's film holds up wonderfully to repeat viewings, and its influence on the horror genre only grows clearer. Five years before *Psycho*, Mitchum was conducting one-sided conversations with God about the "...things you do hate, Lord. Perfume-smellin' things, lacy things, things with curly hair." With his knife in his pocket, Powell brazenly worms his way into a small-town community and the bed of the grieving Willa Harper (Shelley Winters).

While sharing a cell with her soon-to-be-hanged husband Ben (Peter Graves), Powell discovers he has hidden a great deal of money on his property. He sets out to locate the stash, but finds that, while Willa and her daughter Pearl (Sally Jane Bruce) are easily won over, son John is more

stubborn. His threats become more explicit, and it's not long before he resorts to deadly force.

Laughton's direction is exemplary, although the film's failure at the time meant he never directed again. The use of light and dark is stunning, highlighting Powell's almost supernatural ability to slip into the shadows, and the dark humour keeps the atmosphere uncertain. Mitchum plays the balance beautifully, slipping from a smooth-voiced raconteur bouncing a child on his knee to a very real threat in the blink of an eye.

This ability to tonally shift gears is just part of the film's identity as a fairy tale in a Southern Gothic setting. It begins with a spectral warning about wolves in sheep's clothing from the kindly Rachel (Lillian Gish), while the climax resembles the Three Little Pigs, as Powell sings his refrain from the garden while Rachel and the children keep watch inside.

Foreshadowing countless nightmarish boogeymen, *The Night Of The Hunter* is a true horror classic.

Jonathan Hatfull
FILM ★★★★★

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Cape Fear
 Mitchum's violent ex-con relentlessly torments Gregory Peck's lawyer in this classic thriller.

"A PUNK-ROCK

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JOHN DIES AT THE END

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Details 15 // 99 mins // 2012 // £9.99/£12.99 // **DVD** // 17 February
Director Don Coscarelli **Cast** Chase Williamson, Rob Mayes, Paul Giamatti, Clancy Brown **Distributor** Eureka! Entertainment **Extras** Commentary, Deleted Scenes, Featurettes, Interviews



If anyone was going to make a movie of David Wong's cult novel *John Dies At The End*, it had to be Don Coscarelli, the director of *Bubba Ho-Tep*.

David Wong (Chase Williamson) tells his unbelievable story to reporter Arnie Blondestone (Paul Giamatti): how a soy sauce-like substance from another dimension gave him strange powers, how he and his friend John (Rob Mayes) were forced to face grotesque monsters, and how they saved the world from destruction.

Fans of the book might wonder how Coscarelli turned the unwieldy, rambling source material into a coherent film. The short answer is that he doesn't; not quite. While it's easy to complain about what got left out, given the budget and the fact that it's a 100-minute film rather than a 400-page novel, it's amazing how much of the lunatic inspiration is in there.

The main problem is that, like the book, it peaks too early. The first 20

minutes are superb, establishing the trans-dimensional weirdness. It was essential that Coscarelli got the tone right, and he nails it; a kind of slacker Lovecraft that laughs cautiously in the face of madness and threatens to punch it in the dick.

Its weaknesses become more apparent during the second half, as Coscarelli is forced to try and wrangle some kind of structure and ending. This attempt at plot direction is somehow far less interesting, and even occasionally dull. However, the finale is fun, and the chances are that if you've got this far, you're probably invested enough to stick with it.

The performances from Williamson and Mayes are strong, Giamatti brings infectious enthusiasm with credibility, and Clancy Brown gives an amusing turn as celebrity paranormal expert and bad-ass Albert Marconi. *John Dies At The End* is certainly flawed and will irritate as many as it will entertain, but it's a funny, hugely inventive and likeable indie attempt at filming an insane book.

Jonathan Hatfull
SHOW ★★★★★ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Bubba Ho-Tep
 Bruce Campbell and Ossie Davis as Elvis and JFK fight a mummy feeding on their care home's residents.



DOLLMAN/DEMONIC TOYS

Not suitable for children

Details 18 // 79 mins/88 mins // 1991/1992 // £10.39/£10.99 // **DVD** // Out now
Directors Albert Pyun/Peter Manoogian **Distributor** 88 Films **Cast** Tim Thomerson, Jackie Earle Haley, Tracy Scoggins, Bentley Mitchum **Extras** Original Featurettes, Trailers



Charles Band's Full Moon Production company, purveyors of fine straight-to-video fodder like *Puppet Master* and *Subspecies*, delivered two of its best-loved films in the early Nineties, both based on the unbeatable high concept of watching tiny things wreak violence on regular-sized people.

First up is *Dollman* ★★★★★, which stars Tim Thomerson as an ultra-violent cop from another, more futuristic planet who pursues the flying head of a villain so relentlessly that he flies through a wormhole and into the Bronx in the present day. The only catch is that on our planet, he's only 13 inches tall. Together with a single mum neighbourhood watch leader, he takes on the local gang, led by a pre-career-renaissance Jackie Earle Haley.

With an enjoyably deadpan turn from Thomerson as the tiny Clint Eastwood-esque lawman and Haley giving his gangbanger all he's got, *Dollman* is entertaining nonsense that gets by

on inventive chaos and being slightly smarter than it looks. Not too smart, mind you, but it's got a sense of humour and commits to the premise. That being said, it starts to drag well before the 79-minute running time is up.

Demonic Toys ★★★★★ manages to keep things fun for longer, ripping off *Child's Play* with great abandon as dogged cop Judith (Tracy Scoggins) pursues the pair of crooks who killed her husband into a warehouse for unwanted toys. Unfortunately for everyone, the toys are possessed by an evil demonic spirit who is intent on possessing Judith's unborn child.

With a screenplay by a then-budding David S Goyer, *Demonic Toys* embraces its ridiculousness while retaining a welcome wit. There's gasmask children, some god-awful puns, and even a creepy sequence involving a dollhouse. Obviously, if you're not sold on the idea of a warehouse full of killer toys (including a bear, a jack in the box and a babydoll) then this isn't for you. For fans of schlock cinema, however, *Demonic Toys* is a cut above and *Dollman* has a charm beyond its high concept.

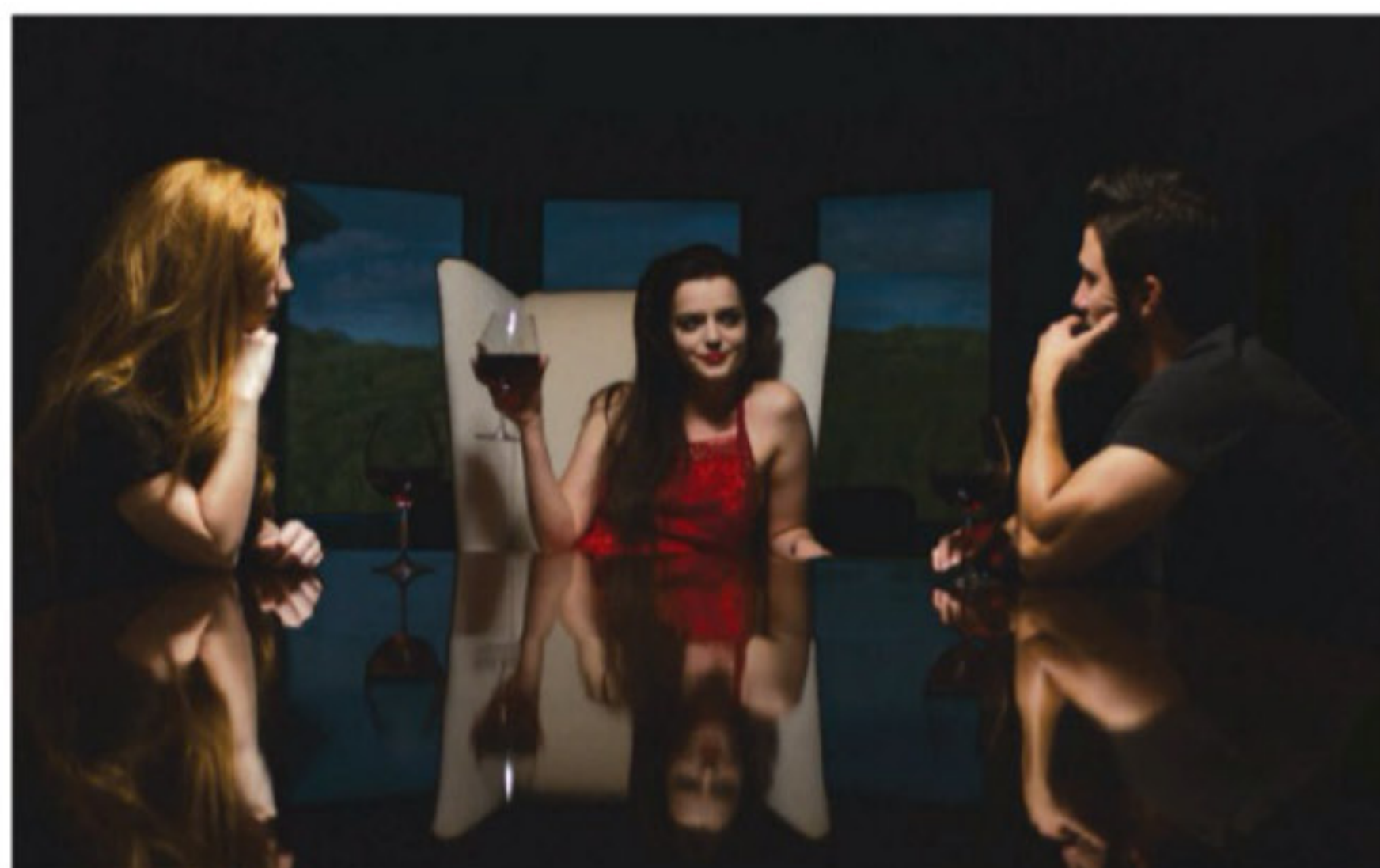
Jonathan Hatfull
EXTRAS ★★☆☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Small Soldiers
 Joe Dante's film doesn't recreate the magic of *Gremlins*, but it has a darkly comic charm.





KISS OF THE DAMNED

Lust for life

Details 18 // 97 mins // 2012 // **DVD** // £9.99 **Released** Out now
Director Xan Cassavetes **Cast** Joséphine de La Baume, Milo Ventimiglia, Roxane Mesquida, Anna Mouglalis **Distributor** Eureka **Extras** Commentary, Interviews



Kiss Of The Damned is steeped in a fairly niche sub-genre that puts everything it has into delivering a sensory experience.

Milo Ventimiglia plays Paolo, a talented but unhappy screenwriter whose time out of the city is interrupted by the beautiful Djuna (Joséphine de La Baume). When he discovers that she's a vampire, Paolo decides to join her in the ranks of the undead, and begins a new life with his lover. However, the arrival of her troubled sister Mimi (Roxane Mesquida) threatens to ruin everything.

Kiss Of The Damned is the first feature film from Xan Cassavetes (daughter of legendary director and *Rosemary's Baby* star John), and it shows a level of confidence and style that marks her out as a very exciting talent to watch. From the opening credits, there is a beguiling look and sound that draws the viewer in, as well as a heightened sense of theatricality. Without being a

direct parody or pastiche, it recalls a sub-genre of vampire movies that at best could overwhelm the viewer with its intoxicating atmosphere. Eroticism plays a big part in *Kiss Of The Damned*, but it doesn't feel extraneous or exploitative; it's part of the heightened sensory world that these characters inhabit.

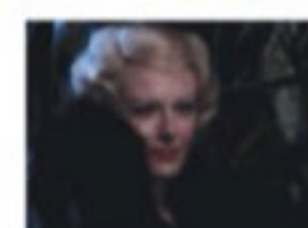
The cast is clearly on-message. De La Baume and Ventimiglia's chemistry is believable, but it's Mesquida who steals the show with a glorious scenery-chewing turn as the wild Mimi.

The target audience is admittedly small, and whether or not it will appeal to you may depend on the amount of affection you have for high camp. As self-aware as it is, it does occasionally tip over the fine line into outright ridiculousness, and the plot, such as it is, is predictable stuff. However, as a cinematic experience it's simply beautiful to watch.

If you give it a chance, you'll discover a wonderfully shot, hypnotically scored and intoxicating homage to such great films as *Daughters Of Darkness*. *Kiss Of The Damned* is a wonderful late-night treat for the senses.

Jonathan Hatfull
FILM ★★★★★ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Daughters Of Darkness
 A young couple are beguiled by a pair of vampires in an opulent off-season hotel.

MACHETE KILLS

Keeping it simple

Details 15 // 108 mins // 2012 // **DVD** // £10 **Released** 17 February
Director Robert Rodriguez **Cast** Danny Trejo, Charlie Sheen, Mel Gibson, Michelle Rodriguez **Distributor** Lionsgate **Extras** Commentaries, Featurettes



Robert Rodriguez continues to spin out his Grindhouse trailer with this energetic sequel to 2010's disappointing *Machete*. Fortunately, *Machete Kills* dispenses with (most) of the attempts at social awareness and embraces its identity as an ultra-violent *Austin Powers*. This time, Danny Trejo's legendary hero must prevent a revolutionary drug lord with a split personality (a hysterical Demian Bichir) from launching a nuke at America, but there's a bigger threat from Mel Gibson's weapons-manufacturing *Star Wars* fan.

Although it's about 20 minutes too long, not much of the running time is wasted. Starry cameos abound, with Lady Gaga, Antonio Banderas and Charlie Sheen showing up with a wink and a smile



(although Amber Heard is mostly wasted as agent Miss San Antonio), and Gibson has fun as the villain who has literally seen the future.

Rodriguez' presence behind the camera ensures plenty of inventive action set pieces and ridiculous effects gags, and the jokes have a much better hit rate this time around. It's flabby and flawed, but a definite improvement.

Jonathan Hatfull
FILM ★★★★★ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★

MARA

Friends like these

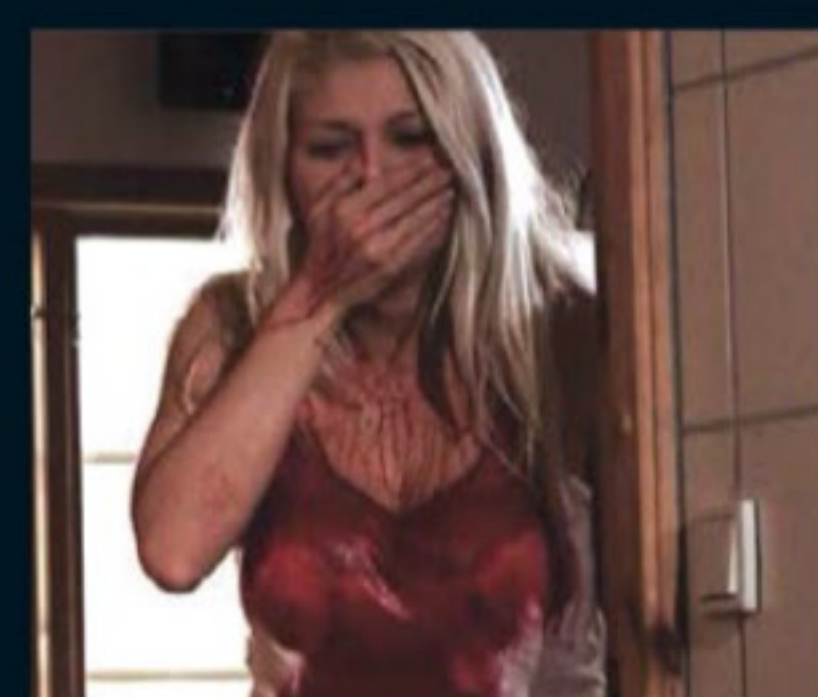
Details 15 // 77 mins // 2012 // **DVD** // £9.29 **Released** Out now
Directors Åke Gustafsson, Fredrik Hedberg, Jacob Kondrup **Cast** Angelica Jansson, Cecilia Samuelsson, Emelie Frantz Nilsson **Distributor** 88 Films **Extras** N/A



This low-budget Swedish horror tries to make the most of the usual restrictions, but it can't find anything new to

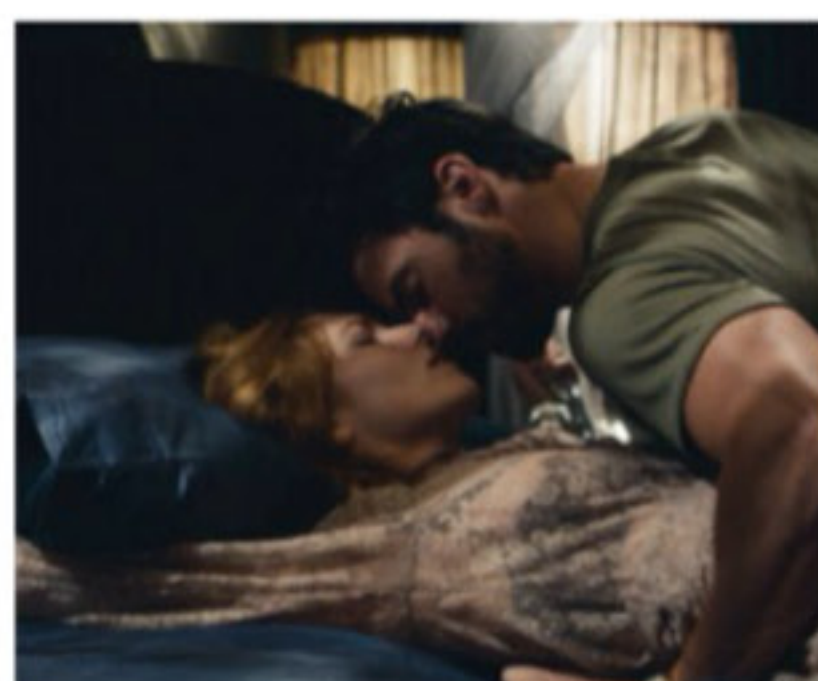
bring to the five-friends-in-a-cabin scenario. Jenny (Angelica Jansson) reluctantly agrees to accompany her cousin and her friends back to the cabin where she saw her mother killing her father. It's not long before she starts seeing her mother in the woods outside, but is she really there, or has Jenny lost her marbles?

The filmmakers bet everything on the hope that you'll be wrong-footed by the answer, but the problem with *Mara* is that we have to get to the end to find out, as the film cuts back and forth between Jenny telling her story to a sympathetic



detective and the cut-out characters disappearing one by one from the cabin. It's obvious what the creators' influences are, but there really is very little by way of characterisation or atmosphere to get the viewer through the long stretches of not much happening. Failures from first-time filmmakers can be forgiven, but *Mara* is definitely a failure.

Jonathan Hatfull
FILM ★★★★★ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★



WAKE IN FRIGHT

Stay for one more



Details 18 // 109 mins // 1971 // // £17.99 **Released** 31 March
Director Ted Kotcheff **Cast** Gary Bond, Donald Pleasence, Chips Rafferty **Distributor** Eureka **Extras** Commentary, Interviews, Behind The Scenes Footage, Booklet



Long after it was believed to be lost, Ted Kotcheff's ferocious horror of the mind *Wake In Fright* has been found and

re-released to stun a new generation. Arriving with ringing endorsements from such luminaries as Martin Scorsese and Nick Cave, the film deserves its reputation as a true classic of Australian cinema.

Gary Bond plays John Grant, an arrogant Englishman who has been sent to teach in a tiny spot in the outback. While spending the night in isolated Bundanyabba on the way to Sydney to meet his girlfriend, Jack loses all his money gambling and falls in with a few local drunks. He loses track of time and himself as days pass and their friendship reveals a darker truth about Australian small-town life.

Kotcheff opens the film with a 360-degree pan around the town where Bond is teaching; little more than a train station and a bar in the middle of a desert. 'The Yabba', by contrast, is overflowing with people, all desperate to get drinking and get John drinking. Their determination to include him is fantastically suffocating; the hand on the shoulder and a glass of beer forced down his throat. Just when John thinks that he's reached his lowest point, he wakes up to find that he's got further to go. Time is lost, and so is John's mind.

It's not that John is an educated man surrounded by idiots. Donald Pleasence is superb as the alcoholic Doc Tydon, who has all he needs in the Yabba: an endless supply of beer, friends who bring him food, and a woman who shares his appetites. The horror comes from the insufferable, inescapable hospitality of John's



new mates, who seem intent on bringing him into the fold and revel in their grotesquely primal state of being. The horror reaches its apex during a lengthy, bloody kangaroo hunt, but *Wake In Fright* will find its way under your skin long before. As John's identity drowns in a primal pool of sweat, beer, brawling and unsolicited friendship, the image of Australian mateship is brutally skewered.

This is a hilarious, horrifying and atmospheric, and will leave you in need of a glass of water and a cold shower.

Jonathan Hatfull

FILM ★★★★★ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Proposition
 Nick Cave and John Hillcoat's brutal western paints a savage portrait of Australian settlers.

MUIRHOUSE

Paranormal inactivity

Details 15 // 80 mins // 2012 // // £9.42 **Released** Out now
Director Tanzeel Rahim **Cast** Iain PF Macdonald, Kate Henderson, Libby Ashby
Distributor Monster Pictures **Extras** Commentary, Trailer, Haunting Documentary



Based on a 'real' (whatever that means) haunted house, Australian found-footage chiller

Muirhouse swaddles itself in the sober grey robes of reality, building tension through interviews and field recordings as Fortean hack Phillip Muirhouse (Iain PF McDonald) spends a night in the benighted Monte Cristo Homestead to promote his book.

It's an effective and atmospheric setup that carefully lays out all the cold steel tools for that middle third escalation all good horror movies thrive on, with plenty of mythology and lashings of foreboding – only when the escalation arrives, it does so in a slightly apologetic manner. Chairs are suddenly rearranged, and creaking footfalls are heard on the stairs.



"Fuck! Fuck! What do you want?" screams a man at a door. The world's longest 30 minutes pass as he wheezes up and down the stairs, turning lights on and off and frantically passing his torch beam over 19th Century chintz. "Fuck! Who are you?" he screams at the ceiling.

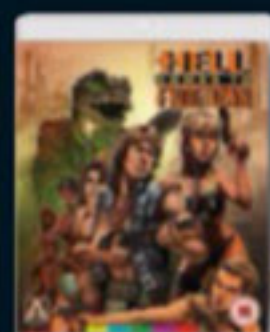
James Hoare

FILM ★★★★★ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★

HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN

Stud on the frog farm

Details 15 // 87 mins // 1988 // // £19.99 **Released** Out now
Director Donald G Jackson **Cast** Roddy Piper, Sandahl Bergman, Cec Verrelli
Distributor Arrow Films **Extras** Interviews, Booklet



It's hardly surprising that *Hell Comes To Frogtown* holds a place in the hearts of good-bad movie fans, as the

concept reads like a teenage boy's fever dream. Rowdy Roddy Piper stars as Sam Hell, a fertile war hero in a post-apocalyptic USA who is forced by the government to impregnate fertile women. Unfortunately for Sam, these fertile women are being held captive by the frog-men mutants, and he'll have to kick some ass to get to them.

The notion of Piper's hero being press-ganged into having sex is played with a (mostly) good-natured sense of humour, and the *They Live* star is an affable central presence.



After a slow start, things pick up in the second half as the citizens of Frogtown are introduced and the film finally delivers on its title. There's nothing in *Hell Comes To Frogtown* that bears close examination, but if you've ever wanted to see Roddy Piper threaten a giant frog with a rocket launcher or realise that he's got an explosive nappy strapped to his nads then this is for you.

Jonathan Hatfull

FILM ★★★★★ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★

HELLGATE *Shut that gate and keep it shut*

Details 18 // 91 mins // 1989 //  // £19.99 **Released** Out now
Director William A Levey **Cast** Ron Palillo, Abigail Wolcott, Carel Trichardt
Distributor Arrow **Extras** Director Interview, Documentaries, Booklet



Sometimes, a lack of sense can be an endearing quality in a horror film, but in the case of William A Levey's *Hellgate*, it's simply indicative of the slapdash nature of the movie as a whole. Lovingly restored by Arrow, *Hellgate* is the tale of four young people who stumble upon the mystery of the Hellgate hitchhiker. The ghost story of a wronged woman, her vengeful father and a magical crystal turns out to be true, and soon our heroes find themselves facing a spectral horde.

Some striking use of colour is really the best thing about *Hellgate*, which tries to juggle so many elements (horror, comedy, biker movies, westerns, Argento movies) and ultimately fails to get any of



them right. That being said, the film's determination to plough on regardless and the ambition/folly of even attempting such a mad mess is quite compelling – for a while at least.

Fans are rewarded with extensive extras – including a long interview with Levy – which turn out to be much more interesting than the film.

Jonathan Hatfull

FILM ★★☆☆☆ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★

LEGENDS OF THE KNIGHT

Breaking down the Bat

Details TBA // 76 mins // 2013 //  // \$32/\$25 (approx £19/£15)
Released Out now **Director** Brett Culp **Cast** Michael E Uslan, Gotham Chopra, Brett Culp, Denny O'Neil **Distributor** Self-released **Extras** Commentary, Additional Footage



Funded on Kickstarter and released on region-free DVD and Blu-ray, *Legends Of The Knight* is an undeniably feelgood look at the very personal impact of Batman, which although moving, doesn't pull back far enough to actually say much.

Jumping between individual case studies of people overcoming hardship takes the emphasis away from any attempt at cohesive or comprehensive analysis, and despite a few brief asides with the likes of movie producer Michael Uslan and comic-book legend Denny O'Neil, *Legends Of The Knights* seems unable to join up those last few dots and make it



explicit why only Batman's example could have given a small boy the strength he needed to punch out cancer or a grown man the direction he needed to visit hospital in costume and not, say, *Doctor Who*, *My Little Pony* or Wigan Athletic.

It's emotive, but far from incisive. You might come away with your eyes stinging, but what did you actually learn?

James Hoare

FILM ★★☆☆☆ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★



THOR: THE DARK WORLD

Bringing back the mallet

Details 12 // 112 mins // 2013 //  // £10/£15 **Released** 24 February
Director Alan Taylor **Cast** Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman, Tom Hiddleston, Anthony Hopkins, Christopher Eccleston **Distributor** Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment **Extras** All Hail The King – A Marvel One-Shot, Exclusive Look – Captain America: The Winter Soldier, Deleted & Extended Scenes, Commentaries, Gag Reel



This is the most fun you'll have in Marvel Phase 2, especially if you're British: Thor riding the Tube, Stellan Skarsgård streaking across Stonehenge and Chris O'Dowd making goo-goo eyes at Natalie Portman were just some of the moments that made us spit out our mead with mirth.

It's not all goof and no gloom, though. Making good on the promise of a 'Dark World', there's brotherly betrayal and a funeral (which is, incidentally, a touching and fitting tribute to the lost character). The relationship between Thor (Chris Hemsworth) and his rock star stepbrother Loki (Tom Hiddleston) takes centre stage as the two are forced to work together to bring down the leader of the Dark Elves, Malekith (Christopher Eccleston).

As far as big bads go, he might as well not be there. In fact, the moments where he does appear seem like filler, as if the writers were worried that too much Loki might make the viewers' heads explode. Note to Marvel: there can never be too much God of Mischief, a fact that will hopefully be rectified in *Thor 3*.

Other players we were pleased to spend more time with were Thor's

kick-ass mum Frigga (Rene Russo), bringing more magic to the realm than before, as well as the previously underused Idris Elba as doorman Heimdall. When the latter shares a heart-to-heart with Thor in an Asgardian pub, you get the sense this never would have happened under original director Kenneth Branagh.

Game Of Thrones director Alan Taylor also brought muddy battles and realism to Asgard, a place that feels more Tolkien than the cosmic Kirby affair of the 2010 film. It also serves to turn the tables on Jane Foster, who assumes the fish out of water role with gusto in spite of reported hard feelings after Marvel split from original director Patty Jenkins.

Compared with the unsmiling, drawn-out *Man Of Steel* and the Avengers-obsessed *Iron Man 3*, *Thor: The Dark World* is a rainbow bridge to increasingly surreal places. And though the post-credits clip is a little jarring, we can't wait to go outer space with *Guardians Of The Galaxy*.

Jodie Tyley

FILM ★★★★★ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Lone Ranger
 One of the more surreal blockbuster action comedies in a while, with great storytelling and gags.



Season Three

GAME OF THRONES

Nice day for a Red Wedding...



Details 18 // 563 mins // 2013 // £27/£34 // **DVD** // 17 February
Creators David Benioff, DB Weiss **Cast** Peter Dinklage, Emilia Clarke, Richard Madden, Michelle Fairley, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Kit Harington, Lena Headey, Maisie Williams, Alfie Allen, Jack Gleeson, Charles Dance **Distributor** Warner Home Video **Extras** 7 Featurettes, In-Episode Guide, Deleted/Extended Scenes, Audio Commentaries



After the sheer blood-letting spectacle of Season Two's Battle of the Blackwater, the onus was on *Game Of Thrones* to prove it

could keep up the pace – and keep it up it does.

The strength of George RR Martin's *A Song Of Ice And Fire* saga has always been in his depiction of the causality in his world, where one character's actions affects those elsewhere, and *Game Of Thrones* successfully replicates this. This symbiosis allows the show to come alive in a way few other shows manage.

This is helped by the memorability of the cast: Tyrion (Peter Dinklage) continues to garner the best one-liners, albeit with competition from new addition Olenna Tyrell (Diana Rigg). Likewise, Daenerys (Emilia Clarke) and Jon Snow (Kit Harington)'s storylines kick into gear after slow second seasons, and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau adds reserves of depth and sympathy you wouldn't have thought possible to Jaime Lannister.

Inevitably, with such a huge cast, some end up short-changed. Bran (Isaac Hempstead-Wright) is reduced to wandering the snowy North;

Stannis (Stephen Dillane) and Davos (Liam Cunningham) do little more than brood, and the luckless Theon (Alfie Allen)'s lot is to essentially spend the season being tortured.

The aforementioned breaking of Theon makes for difficult viewing, although it pales in comparison to the now-infamous 'Red Wedding' sequence, which proved shocking even for those who knew what was coming. For everyone else, it was a brutal reminder that in *Game Of Thrones*, no one is safe, with three of the main cast making abrupt exits.

The use of shock tactics in place of the gradual building of tensions of the first season means Season Three falls slightly short, but only of the high standards it has set for itself, up there with *The Sopranos*, *Boardwalk Empire* and *Mad Men* and far beyond everything else. We look forward to seeing what tune the *Song Of Ice And Fire* adopts next.

Steve Wright

SHOW ★★★★★ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



True Blood
 Another HBO drama that isn't afraid to explore territories that other shows don't.



Season One

DRAGON BALL GT

Devolution of the species

Details PG // 800 mins // 1996 // £29.99 // **DVD** // Out now **Creators** Osamu Kasai, Atsushi Maekawa **Cast** Roger Rhodes, Stephanie Nadolny, Elise Baughman, Eric Vale, Kyle Hebert **Distributor** Manga Entertainment **Extras** 'Blue Water' English Dub, Original Japanese Voice Acting



Dragon Ball Z was originally supposed to end after its first two sagas, when it still retained its 'Z' suffix. In evolving the title to 'GT', the franchise loses more than just its original name; it loses everything that made *Dragon Ball* iconic and groundbreaking in the first place, regurgitating story ideas and diluting fan-favourite characters to a spattering of feckless cameos. This may be due to the lack of active involvement of *Dragon Ball* creator Akira Toriyama, who only 'oversaw production'; helping with character design and providing early concept artwork.

The *GT* series continues the (mis) adventures of Goku, *Dragon Ball Z*'s mouthy protagonist, who is inadvertently returned to infancy by a wish made upon the Black Star Dragon Balls. This prompts an uninspired romp across the galaxy in an effort to retrieve the Black Star Balls.

The frenetic action of *Dragon Ball Z* is dialled back – a relief to some fans,

perhaps (the original series was all over the place), but the episode-long fight scenes and hectic brawling have been replaced with weak dialogue and some horrific voice-acting. *GT* seems like a series fresh out of ideas, relying on dragging back old villains in a desperate attempt to imbue the series with some muted level of threat. After already seeing Majin Buu blow up Earth in the previous series, you'd expect writer Atsushi Maekawa to focus on galvanising Baby, Android 17 and the Doll Collector – *GT*'s premier big-bads – and make them resound with loaded menace. He doesn't, opting instead for sprawling monologues of bloated exposition in almost every scene.

The British release of *GT* includes the International 'Blue Water' dub, which sticks closer to the original script than the US version, with the original Japanese OST replacing the US remaster. This is probably the series' saving grace – the music continually evokes the atmosphere and tension the dialogue never manages – and a sad reflection on the series as a whole.

Dom Peppiatt

SHOW ★★☆☆☆ **EXTRAS** ★★☆☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Coyote Ragtime Show
 A perfect mix of action-packed campiness and emotive storytelling.



DOCTOR WHO: THE TIME OF THE DOCTOR

The ghosts of Christmas past

Details PG // 240 mins // 2010-2013 // £13.99/£17.49 // // Out now
Showrunner Steven Moffat **Cast** Matt Smith, Jenna Coleman, Arthur Darvill, Karen Gillan **Distributor** Zentertain **Extras** Behind The Scenes, Farewell To Matt Smith, 50th Anniversary Documentary



Eleventh Doctor Matt Smith has been the star of four Christmas specials, somewhat dismissively collected on *The Time Of The Doctor*

+ *Other Eleventh Doctor Christmas Specials*, but decreasingly have they had any connection to the season.

2010's sublime 'A Christmas Carol' ★★★★★ is one of the best. Sticking to the feelgood Russell T Davies template with the right mix of schmaltz and celebrity, it's also a perfect example of the sort of story that can only be told with *Doctor Who*.

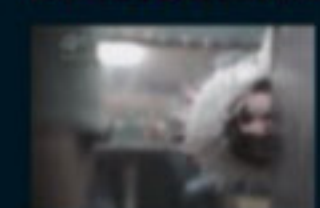
By 2011 the demands of the holiday began to take their toll. Though 'The Doctor, The Widow And The Wardrobe' ★★★★★ captured the essential wonder of the Doctor, the threads binding the seasonal aspect of the story together had begun to fray and Steven Moffat had sought comfort in his old standby – the power of love to overcome alien technology (see 'Closing Time', 'Asylum Of The Daleks', 'The Lodger' etc). By 2012, the Moff was through with being held back by baby Jesus, and 'The Snowmen' ★★★★★ didn't just rely heavily on his increasingly prominent secondary

trope (stuff from the Sixties), but was really a backdoor opener for the second part of Series Seven, introducing the arc plot, the recurring villain and a new set of enemies.

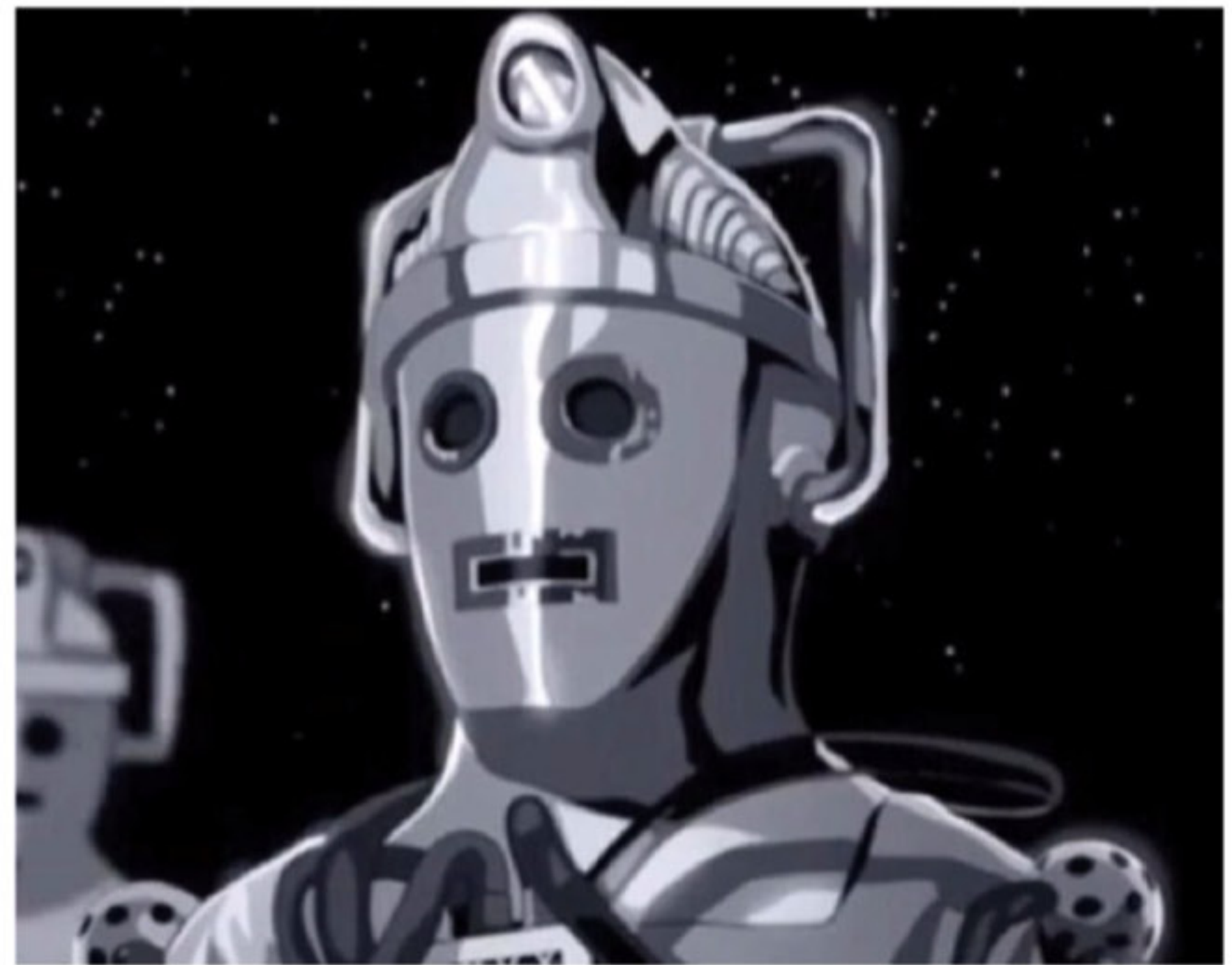
All of which leads us neatly into 2013's 'The Time Of The Doctor' ★★★★★, the dispiriting awful third part in the anniversary triptych which begrudgingly pulled on a Santa hat in the form of a town called Christmas. Matt Smith is clearly tired, and his cartoonish energy curtailed due to an IRL leg injury. The ongoing emasculation of the Daleks continues as they roll around asking for someone to please bring them the Doctor, the Silents are retconned into uselessness, a powerful female character is reduced to being the Doctor's ex, a headless Cyberman is drop-kicked straight into Tumblr and the actual act of regeneration is as brusque as a mic drop.

James Hoare
EXTRAS ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Misfits Christmas Special
 A strangely moving festival special from British sci-fi's anti-Who.



DOCTOR WHO: THE MOONBASE

The Cyberman in the Moon

Details PG // 100 mins // 1967 // £20.42 // // Out now **Showrunner** Innes Lloyd **Cast** Patrick Troughton, Frazer Hines, Anneke Wills, Michael Craze, Patrick Barr **Distributor** Zentertain **Extras** Commentary, Interviews, Documentary, Photo Gallery



Following the similarly themed 'Power Of The Daleks' and 'The Underwater Menace', it was the new

dictionary definition of that old *Doctor Who* staple, the base under siege, and it introduced what is objectively the best look for the Cybermen, but does a part share in better future serials and the enigma factor of having two wiped episodes (recreated here with splendidly atmospheric animation) really make 1967's 'The Moonbase' a classic?

Not really. In many respects the story is a dull and weakly padded retread of 'The Tenth Planet', but following so soon after the Cybermen's debut it firmly cemented Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis' haunting creations as the 'other' Daleks.

Like 'The Tenth Planet', a key character spends most of the adventure unconscious (Frazer Hines' Jamie instead of William Hartnell's First

Doc). Moreover, there's a pleasingly multicultural hue to the research station, and defeating the Cybermen hinges on them being unable to resist the power of physics – on the South Pole it was radiation, on the Moon it's gravity.

On the upside, Ben (Michael Craze) and Polly (Anneke Wills) are slightly less annoying as companions – Ben's "Cor blimey" has been toned down a bit, and Polly gets to do something plot-relevant – but it's Patrick Troughton who really makes the difference.

Even the weakest Second Doctor story can be lifted by Troughton's formidable acting talents, bringing a touch of the Hammer horror reaction shot to his sudden realisation of the Cybermen's whereabouts and providing the first real definition of the Doctor as we now know him.

"There are some corners of the universe which have bred the most terrible things," he says as spines tingle. "Things which act against everything we believe in. They must be fought."

James Hoare
SHOW ★★★★★ **EXTRAS** ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Waters Of Mars
 Modern Who's best base-under-siege story bucks convention in a number of ways.





SciFiNow
Must
play now!

KILLZONE: SHADOW FALL

The next-generation of sci-fi shooters

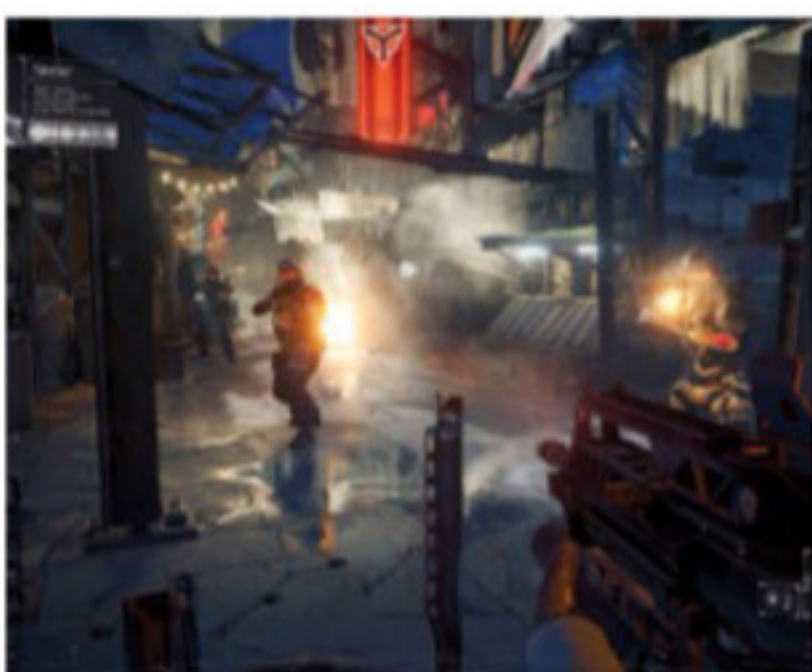
Format PlayStation 4 // **Age rating** 18 // **Publisher** Sony // **Developer** Guerrilla Games
// **Players** 1-24 // **Released** Out now // **Price** £49.99 // **Downloadable** Yes



Amid a pretty lukewarm line-up of launch titles, *Killzone: Shadow Fall* is an impressive technical showcase of the

PlayStation 4's potential, but once again highlights Guerrilla Games' limitations as a studio. In many regards, *Killzone* was always going to be a tough sell to PlayStation devotees, with the franchise being renowned for its solid, but somewhat unspectacular, FPS combat and generic sci-fi story. With *Shadow Fall*, however, the studio has upped the ante to spectacular levels.

So many tired, old aspects of the series have been left on the cutting room floor. The cover shooting mechanics – which forced you to bunker in behind impressive-looking bits of derelict buildings before occasionally popping up to mow down waves of Helghast cannon fodder – have been removed almost entirely. *Killzone* has finally caught up with the rest of the industry; *Shadow Fall* is a proper tactical shooter that forces you to think your way through confrontations,



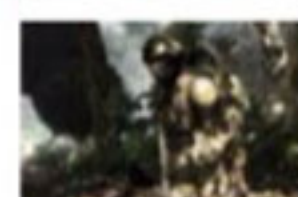
assault rifle in hand, of course. *Shadow Fall* does a wonderful job of immersing you in the world, and you'll feel like you're in the boots of a heavily armed soldier of death, thanks to the sluggish and heavy movement. If you're familiar with the speed and slickness of *Call Of Duty*, expect a learning curve, but the payoff is worth it in the end.

Killzone had tough competition in the launch window from fellow sci-fi shooters *Warframe* and *Blacklight: Retribution*, but the franchise's superiority should never have been called into question. *Shadow Fall* takes full advantage of the PS4's power, and never fails to look stunning. If you're looking for the game to justify the £350 price of entry to the next-gen party then look no further.

Admittedly, the narrative – a Cold War-type scenario where space Nazis deal in subterfuge and deception – fails to light any fires. It's here where Guerrilla continues to stumble, but the moment-to-moment gameplay is so damn satisfying that it's tough to care. *Killzone: Shadow Fall* isn't going to blow your mind, but it is a ridiculously pretty, solid-as-all-hell and frantic first-person shooter that's a must-buy for any PS4 early adopters.

Josh West
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Call Of Duty: Ghosts
It couldn't be less comparable with *Shadow Fall*, but you get to go into space. That's cool, right?



Season Two

SciFiNow
Must
play now!

THE WALKING DEAD – ALL THAT REMAINS

Ghosts of the past

Format PC/iOS/Xbox 360/PlayStation 3 // **Age rating** 12 // **Publisher** Telltale Games // **Developer** Telltale Games // **Players** 1 // **Released** Out now // **Price** £3.99 // **Downloadable** Yes



It feels good returning to the end of the world. There's nothing quite like getting reacquainted with an old friend, especially

after the hell we endured together, but there's something different about Clementine. 16 months have passed since the dramatic conclusion to *Season One*, and Clem isn't just older; she's tougher, and a little more world-weary than we remember her.

There was every chance that Telltale's return to *The Walking Dead* would go horribly wrong. The first season did a wonderful job of developing the relationship between Lee and Clementine, with what began as an uneasy alliance for survival blossoming into a father-daughter relationship that tugged at the soul. The realisation, then, that Clementine would be taking point as the playable lead turned some heads, but we couldn't help wondering if it was a step too far. Could we possibly emphasise with a young girl in a world where death and disaster lay around every corner? Would Telltale be willing to push her into the same extreme situations we've become accustomed to from the *Walking Dead* franchise?

All That Remains washes away those doubts within minutes. This is a brutal opener and a firm statement of intent from Telltale, and the world is every bit as unforgiving. The

studio doesn't pull any punches, and while the overall plotting stumbles somewhat, *All That Remains* doesn't hold back on the gore and drama.

When it comes down to it, narrative is everything in *The Walking Dead*, so it's disappointing to see a new group of characters introduced and given such little screen time with which to develop any real personality or emotional resonance. Presumably, we will get some one-on-one time in future episodes, but for now they've only succeeded in dimming the spotlight around Clementine. It's also worth noting that while your decisions from *Season One* and *400 Days* carry across, they have little impact on the events that unfold here.

A few shortcomings aside, *All That Remains* is an emotional, tense and well-written reintroduction to *The Walking Dead*, taking everything you've come to expect after the stellar first season and amplifying it. It's only going to get more brutal from here, and we're struggling to decide who to feel more sorry for: Clementine or our achy-breaky hearts.

Josh West
VERDICT ★★★★★

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SciFiNow

What We Want It

TOYS // COLLECTIBLES



1 WHITE WALKER STATUE

You can almost feel the chill breeze sweeping in from the Land of Always Winter with this nine-inch tall polystone bust from the HBO Store. Modelled on the White Walker that stopped Samwell Tarly in his tracks, this statuette comes with a 13-inch crystal spear and is hand-painted, hand-numbered and strictly limited to 35.

store.hbouk.com // £85

BEST FOR: THE COLD
BLOODED



3 JON SNOW FIGURE

Firm-hearted bastard son of House Stark Jon Snow steps out into the frozen lands north of The Wall in this 7.5-inch figure from the HBO Store. The wonderfully detailed face and costume capture Kit Harington's ranger in all his glory – it's like he's stepped straight out of your plasma...

store.hbouk.com // £16.99

BEST FOR: GUARDING THE
REALMS OF MEN

2 MARTIAN BOTTLE OPENER

Put the invader to good use by wrapping his toothy maw around your nearest bottle and pop off the cap. Another gem from Planet Replica's Topps trading card range, this *Mars Attacks!* bottle opener comes in hefty solid cast metal with a smooth pewter finish. It's thirsty work in the slave gang, so get yours now before the next mass grave you dig is your own.

www.planetreplicas.com // £12.99

BEST FOR: YOUR LAST DRINK



5 DAENERYS TARGARYEN FIGURE

Remember when a box of eggs was just a box of eggs? Take the HBO Store back in time to *Game Of Thrones* Season One with this 7.5-inch Dany figure, clad in her wedding dress, you can swap the eggs around between hands and chest at her feet. Maybe they'll hatch. store.hbouk.com // £16.99

BEST FOR: THE MOTHER OF DRAGONS

4 LAWGIVER MARK 1

Judge Dredd's iconic sidearm can now be yours, courtesy of Planet Replicas. This perfectly weighted replica is ideal for cosplayers, taking down Chief Judge Cal and his murderous Kleggs or defending the ruined Hall of Justice in the darkest days of the Apocalypse War. Strictly limited to 350 pieces, make like Carlos Ezquerro and... draw!

www.planetrelicas.com // £125

BEST FOR: MEGA-CITY LAWMEN

5

6 MARS ATTACKS! USB

That giant Martian cranium isn't just for dreaming up perverse new ways to humiliate Sixties small-town America; it can house 8GB of data too! The lurid colours are pure B-movie schlock, while the rubberised PVC body can take more damage than the Martians themselves – get yours now from Planet Replicas. It comes pre-loaded with a number of *Mars Attacks!* pictures, which is a lovely touch. www.planetrelicas.com // £16.99

BEST FOR: SNEAKING OUT SCHEMATICS

6

PLASTIC HEAD CLOTHING

The 5 coolest Doctor Who clothes from www.PlasticHead.com

1. DALEK SILHOUETTE



Make a statement with this unorthodox orange crewneck sweater showing a blue silhouette of Skaro's iconic fascist pepper pots. If the Doctor was here, he'd namedrop Wahol.

£31



2. 50th ANNIVERSARY HOODIE

The complete line-up of Doctors – sans the War Doctor and the newly minted 12th – adorn this zip-up hooded sweater, with the anniversary logo on the front. £40

3. TRUST ME T-SHIRT



Say your goodbyes to the Matt Smith era with this white T-shirt paying tribute to 11's self-satisfied self-confidence.

£13.50

4. DAVROS' NEW EMPIRE TEE



A throwback to the Daleks' last epic encounter with the Doctor – 2008's 'The Stolen Earth' – Davros leads his army out into this light grey T-shirt. £13.50

5. ARE YOU MY MUMMY? TEE



Another classic story gets its dues, this time the supremely creepy ninth episode of the Christopher Eccleston era.

Don't get nightmares. £13.50

BATTLELORE SECOND EDITION

Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games // Players: 2 // RRP: £64.99

BattleLore was originally released in 2006 by its owners Days Of Wonder. The game was eventually bought by Fantasy Flight Games, which released a couple of expansion packs before cancelling the product line in 2010.

Fantasy Flight Games has now decided that it's time to once again push the classic wargame, having just re-released it in a stunning new second edition that cleans up the previous rules and delivers a game that is as fun to play as it is beautiful to look at.

And BattleLore really does look gorgeous. Granted, it features an array of gruesome monsters across the two featured armies, but they boast some of the best modelwork around, allowing you to see every little detail. The same attention has been passed on to the rest of its components, from its sturdy board

to its large cardboard cut-out obstacles and beautifully designed cards. It really is a game you'll be proud to have in your collection.

The gameplay of BattleLore is just as impressive, although a little light if you're used to more hardcore wargames. Originally created by Richard Borg, it shares many details with other military games he's made, such as *Battle Cry* and *Memoir '44*. Each player has an army, with which they must wipe out their opponent.

Turns consist of two phases the 'Main Phase' and the 'Upkeep Phase'. During the Main Phase, players play 'Command Cards' to order troops, move their armies and attack each other. The Upkeep Phase deals with securing any victory points (by occupying specific hexes or completing other objectives), drawing new 'Command Cards' or using 'Lore

1 GAME BOARD

The durable board is split into three distinct areas: the Left Section, Centre Section and Right Section. You can play allies in any of these areas, but only move ones indicated by the 'Command Card' you're currently playing.

5 TOKENS

There are all sorts of useful tokens in BattleLore. Battle effects include 'Wound', 'Poison' and 'Stun' tokens, 'Lore Tokens' are used to activate 'Lore Cards', while 'Victory Tokens' are needed to win games.

7 TERRAIN TILES

There are all sorts of different terrain in BattleLore, from forests to rivers, and they all have a huge effect on how games play out. Most will block lines of sight and offer cover bonuses, so use them tactically.

4 DICE

Dice are used to resolve BattleLore's fast-paced combat. Like many board games, there's nowhere near enough, so you might want a second pack so you each have them to hand.

3 DEPLOYMENT CARDS

These are used to initially place your troops. They are placed face-down and contain decoys, so it's entirely possible to trick your opponent and create advantageous starts for yourself.

6 LORE CARDS

These grant extremely powerful effects, but you'll need to amass enough 'Lore Tokens' first in order to use them.

2 BANNER MARKERS

Secure these strategic points with friendly tokens to earn additional 'Victory Points' each turn.

Cards' powerful effects that can greatly change the tide of battle.

Combat is fast and straightforward, not relying on the dice found in similar games, while many monsters come with additional bonuses, ranging from 'Pierce' to 'Strike' attacks that can grant additional damage against certain enemies. The need to play 'Command Cards' means that you'll sometimes be unable to move certain soldiers (the board is divided into three distinct parts) until you draw the right card, but it's a disadvantage that can easily be worked around with good plays.

Even though it uses terms like 'Line Of Sight' and 'Terrain', *BattleLore* is much lighter than more traditional war games. That's to its advantage, however, as it's also not bogged down by dull, clunky rules. Fast-paced and with 14 campaign-based scenarios, *BattleLore* is an excellent update that deserves to find a brand new fanbase. Roll on the expansion packs!

BEST FOR: STRATEGY FANS

TOP FIVE

MAGIC: THE GATHERING – MAGIC 2014



1. MUTAVALT £26



2. GARRUK, CALLER OF BEASTS £22



3. CHANDRA, PYROMANCER £19



4. ARCHANGEL OF THUNE £17



5. KALONIAN HYDRA £15

Warage

Publisher: District Games // Players: 2-4 // RRP: £34.99



We've played a lot of card games at SciFiNow, but this is one of the most inventive we've encountered for some time. Taking on the role of a hero, you have 100 hit points, and must reduce your opponents to zero. You do this by equipping and activating

a variety of costs, all of which need hit points to activate. It's a fantastic idea, as you really have to think about how you play every card. 'Equipment' cards are attached to characters, 'Helper' cards represent familiars that can buff and help heroes, while 'Flash' cards can be played at any time, potentially offering surprise attacks. There are also 'Season' cards that take effect if their season is currently activated. You can sell cards to earn hit points, draw new cards at the beginning of each turn and

hopefully take out your enemies before they do the same to you. It feels a little unbalanced in multiplayer – mainly because it rewards ganging up on other players – but it scales extremely well for just two players, and already boasts a lot of variety in the cards that are available. There's only a few racers and classes currently on offer – all of which offer distinct bonuses – but we imagine this will change with later expansions.

BEST FOR: MAGIC: THE GATHERING PLAYERS

Eldritch Horror

Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games // Players: 1-8 // RRP: £49.99



Fans of HP Lovecraft will be in seventh heaven with *Eldritch Horror*, or should that be the seven pits of hell? Fantasy Flight Games has taken the often clunky rules of *Arkham*

Horror and greatly refined them, making for a more streamlined experience. As with *Arkham Horror*, you play an investigator who is trying to stop one of the 'Ancient Ones' from awakening and plunging the world into darkness. You do this by exploring the globe, solving mysteries and closing the gates that pop up across the game board. Being a co-operative game, everyone wins or loses, so teamwork is essential, as you're also on an incredibly tight time limit. *Eldritch Horror* does away with a lot of the more complicated

rules of *Arkham*, which will proclaim many to say that it's been dumbed down as a result. We don't believe this to be the case at all, as the entire pace of the game is far better, while the storytelling throughout remains top notch. The components are cheaper than what we'd expect from Fantasy Flight Games, and its lacking in replay value due to a limited number of encounter cards – an expansion pack is desperately needed – but this is otherwise an excellent reboot of an old classic.

BEST FOR: HP LOVECRAFT FANS

Expansion Of The Month ZOMBICIDE: TOXIC CITY MALL

Publisher: Guillotine Games // Players: 1-6
RRP: £39.99



This pricey but gorgeous expansion pack introduces a host of great features. The biggest change is the addition of toxic zombies that deal damage to any heroes

in the same zone as them. Also new are the Zombivors, brand new tanks that take far more hits than normal survivors, but have less actions and are much slower. There's even a game mode called 'Ultrared Mode' that lets survivors earn more experience points and use better-graded weapons, although there are more dangerous foes to dispatch as a result. Add a selection of new survivors and ten more missions, and *Toxic City Mall* is an expensive but highly essential expansion.

Do You Remember? DARK FUTURE

Warhammer Games does Mad Max



Dark Future was an apocalyptic board game from 1988 that saw players vie for dominance against each other in souped-up, heavily

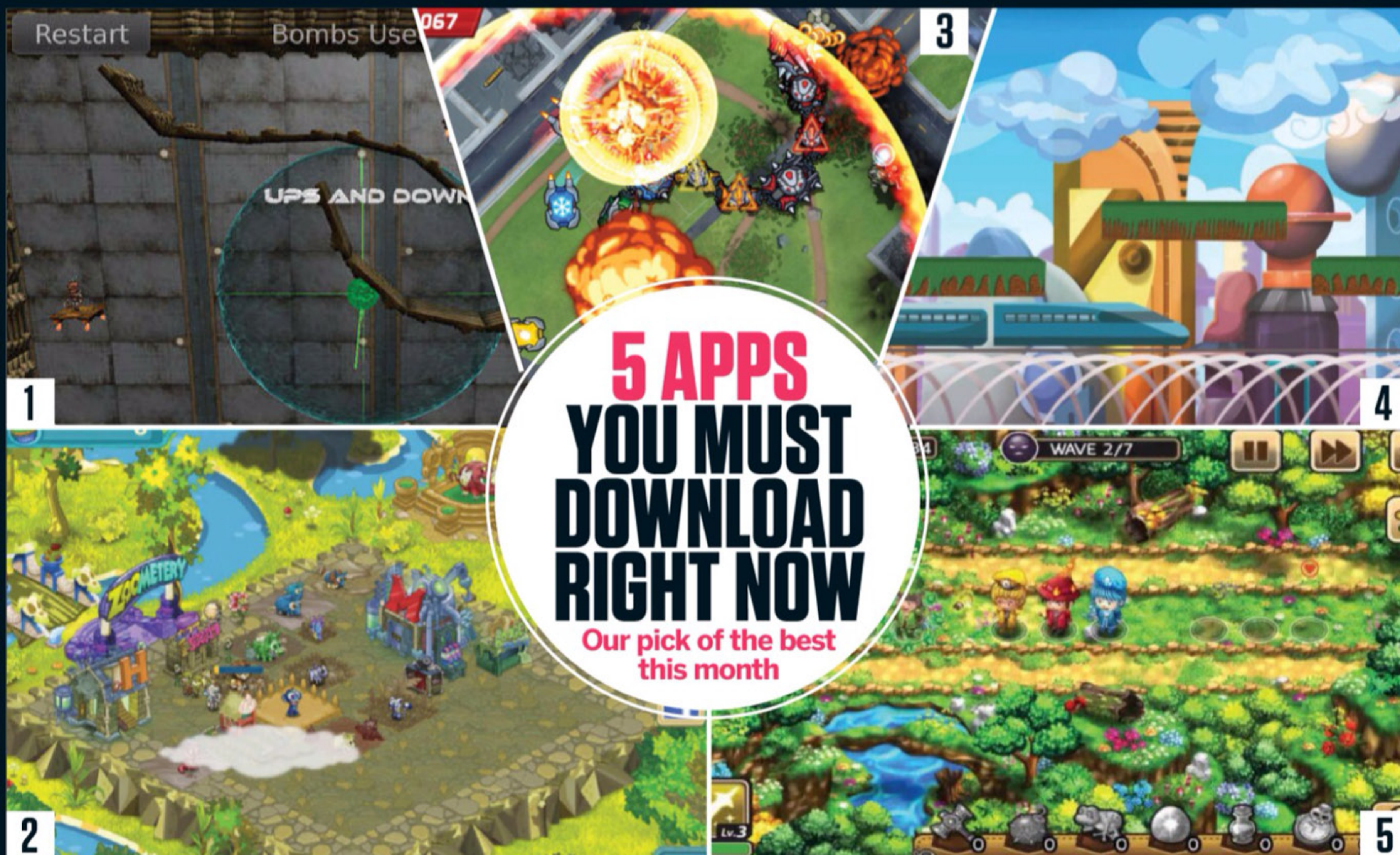
armoured cars. Players would build up their cars using a detailed point-based system and then take to the highways and attempt to destroy each other. It's a solid game, marrying the rough-and-tumble gameplay of *Blood Wars* to thematic apocalyptic Westerns like *Mad Max*. Movement was handled extremely well, creating a great sensation of speed, while the combat mechanics allowed players to produce large amounts of carnage. Originally set in 1995, it was updated to 2021 when Games Workshop commissioned a set of novels set in the interesting universe. Oh, and if you recognise the illustration found on the instruction book cover, it was originally used for the Fighting Fantasy book *Freeway Fighter*.

8 MODELS

The models used in *BattleLore* are stunning. They depict two races: the orc-like Uthunk Y'Ilan and the human Daqan Lords, and both are bolstered by an impressive number of fantasy creatures, from rune golems to the disgusting and highly dangerous Chaos Lord. They're also the same scale as *Descent*. Do we smell a future crossover?

9 COMMAND CARDS

'Command Cards' are used to primarily drive play, and give out specific instructions that usually only affect certain parts of the board, so you'll need to work out when it's best to use them.



RUSTY ROBOT

FOR: IOS
PRICE: FREE



1 The goal of this rag doll physics puzzler is a simple one: plant explosions in the right places to propel the eponymous android onto the next platform. Either tap the screen for a no-messing, straightforward detonation, or hold and aim for more accurate results. The good news is that there's an endless supply of blasts at your fingertips, but there are currently only 15 levels to complete, with plans to add to them further down the line.

BEST FOR: HAPPY BLASTERS

PET ZOOMETERY

FOR: IOS
PRICE: FREE



2 There's no end of zombie-related apps out there, but this has to be one of our favourites. It gives players the unique opportunity to build their own zoo filled with undead animals, aka Zoombies. These cute critters can be cross-bred with bizarre results, and you can train your pets to perform tricks. Aside from being a zoo keeper, you will also be in charge of designing attractions and habitats, but at least there's no mucking out involved.

BEST FOR: ZOMBIE FANS

COLOSSATRON: MASSIVE WORLD THREAT

FOR: IOS/ANDROID
PRICE: £0.69/\$0.99



3 While you're waiting for Godzilla to crash into cinemas, have fun playing as a big city stomper. You're a giant robotic snake, and your objective is to destroy everything, staying in top mankind-crushing form by attaching coloured Powercores. Essentially, it's a match-three game like *Candy Crush*, but with an original twist.

BEST FOR: MATCH-THREE EXPERTS

TESLA BOY

FOR: IOS/ANDROID
PRICE: FREE

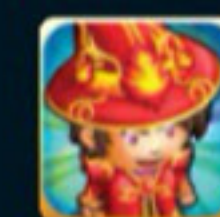


4 Run through dimensions as the time-travelling robot known as Tesla Boy. He's trying to find his creator, and there's beautiful scenery to explore along the way. The controls are easy to get to grips with: just tap to jump, and tap again to go even higher, which you'll need in order to clear monsters and traps. There are also super-powered treasures to collect that will help you reach your goal in time. It's simple, but the adventure storyline gives this runner game an edge.

BEST FOR: RUNNERS

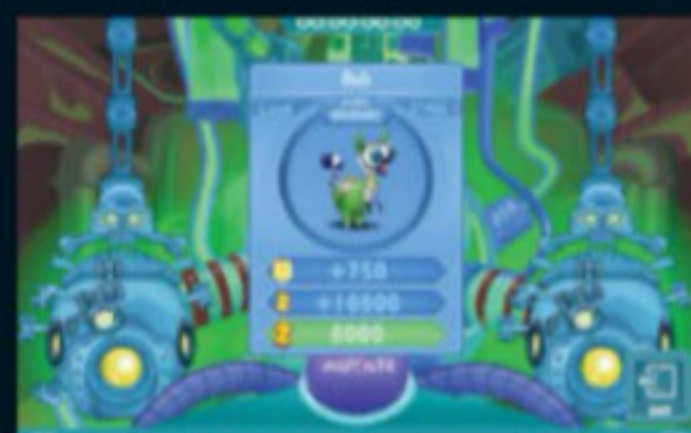
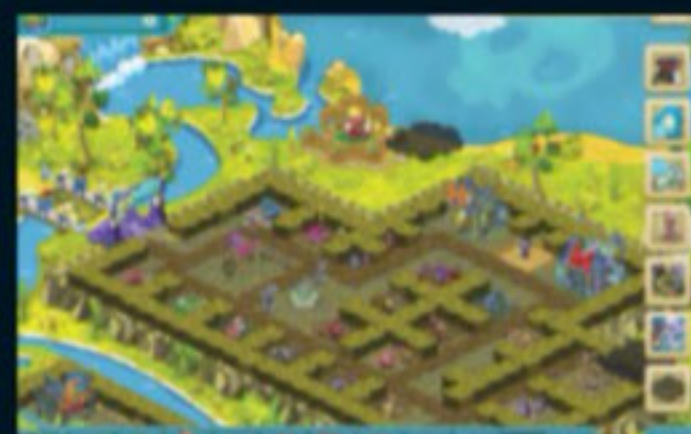
ELDORON DEFENSE

FOR: IOS
PRICE: FREE



5 This tower defence game is based around an academy of magic, the Eldoron, which is under attack. You must scour the best positions for your students to defeat monsters, as well as plan combinations of elemental magic. There are six elements, and students of the same type will produce more powerful magic, while opposites create Hybrid Magic with wicked results. It will have you under its spell faster than you can say "app-racadabra".

BEST FOR: TOWER DEFENDERS

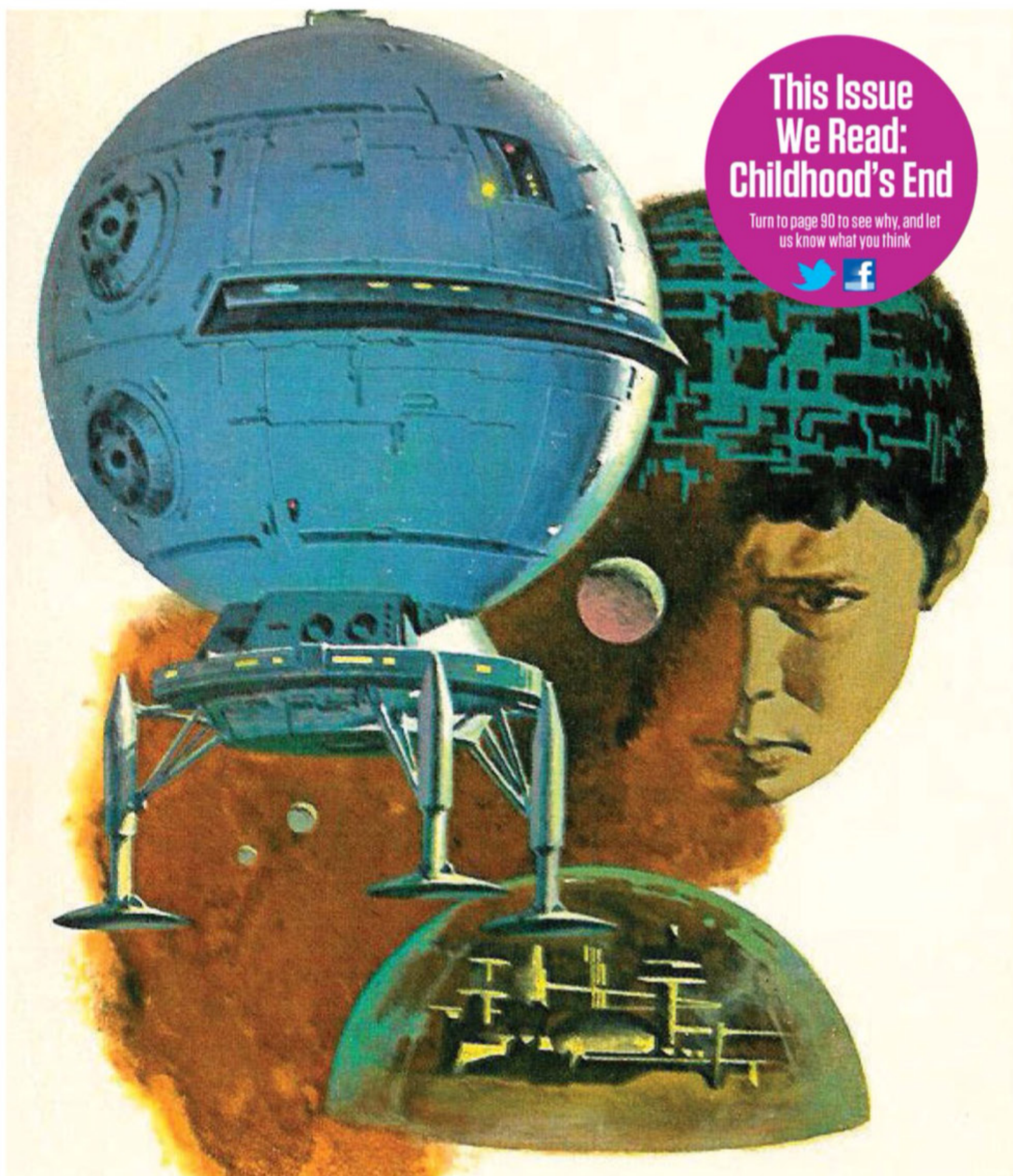


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This Issue We Read: Childhood's End

Turn to page 90 to see why, and let us know what you think



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Your Opinions

Tell us what you've been reading on Facebook or Twitter, and we'll print it

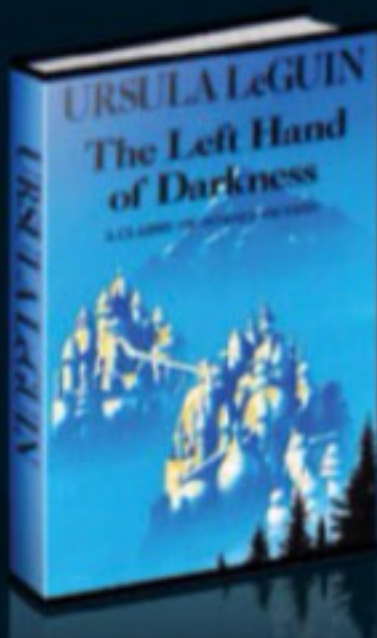
Your Decision

Let us know what you want to see. This is your section, so tell us what you think

Your Reviews

Write a review of the last book you read, and it could appear on scifinow.co.uk. Submit your review as a 300-word text file to scifinow@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Next We'll Be Reading: *Left Hand Of Darkness* by Ursula K Le Guin



1 Pick up *Left Hand Of Darkness* by Ursula K Le Guin, the analysis of sexless androgyny that took home Hugo and Nebula awards.

2 Follow SciFiNow on Twitter. Read and share your thoughts with the hashtag #BookClub; they might make it into the magazine!

3 You can contribute to the Book Club discussions as much or as little as you like; the most important thing is that you have fun.

4 Pick up issue 92 of SciFiNow to check out what we thought and learn about the history of the book and its author with our Essential Read.

WORDS
MATTHEW
HANDRAHAN

ESSENTIAL READ: CHILDHOOD'S END

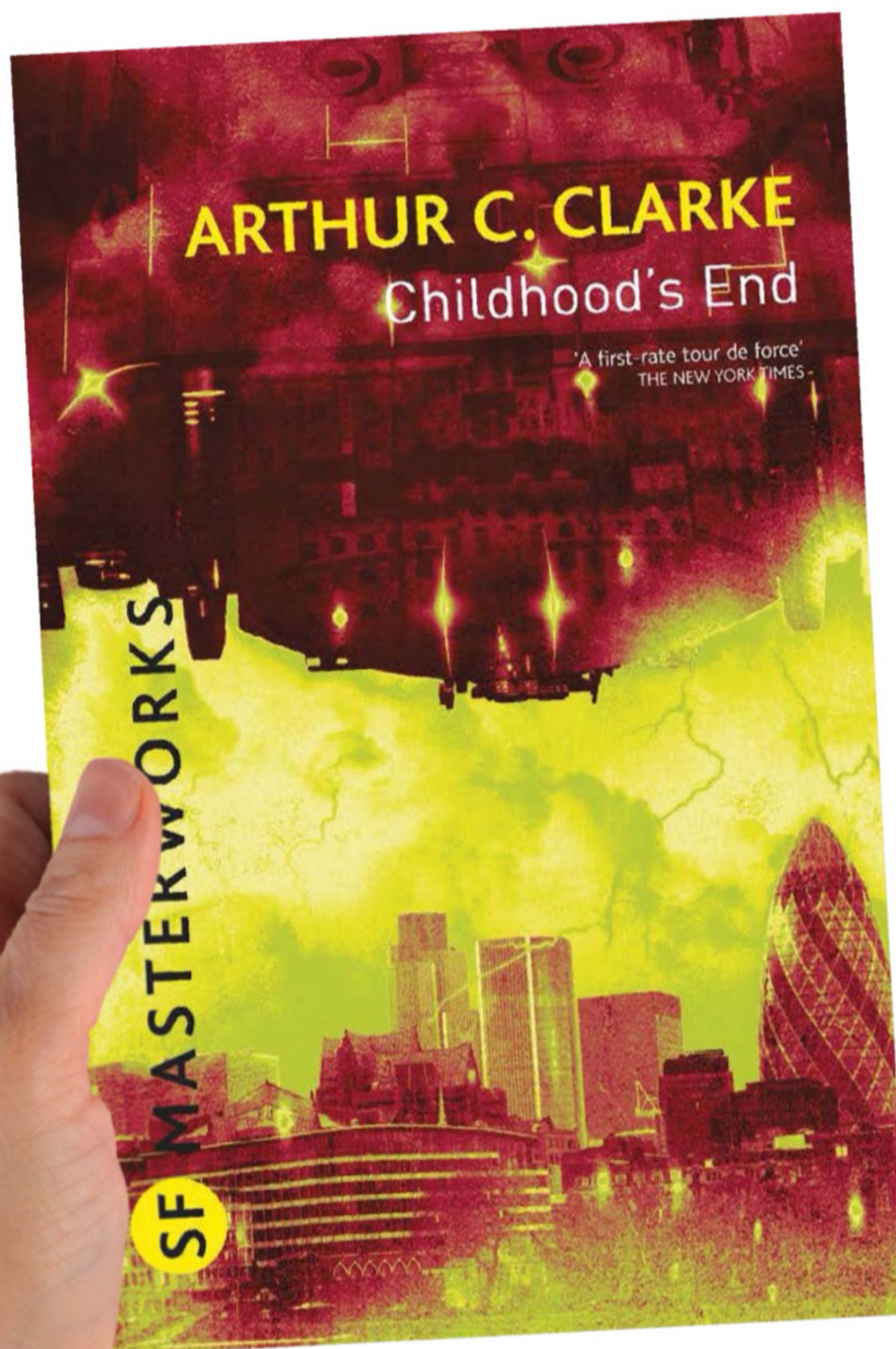
ARE WE ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE?
STATISTICALLY SPEAKING IT'S VERY
UNLIKELY, BUT IF ARTHUR C CLARKE'S VIEW
OF ALIENS IS ACCURATE, WE SHOULD THINK
TWICE BEFORE INVITING THEM FOR TEA...



In all the years of human beings capturing the world around them in photographs, there can be no single more

important image than NASA's 'Pale Blue Dot'. Taken by the Voyager 1 space probe in 1990 at a distance of 3.7 billion miles from Earth, it framed our planet in a context that, until then, no human had contemplated. Against the vast backdrop of the Solar System, Earth was an aquamarine speck just a tenth of a pixel wide. The picture was taken at the request of Carl Sagan, that great explainer of science, who believed, quite rightly, that its humbling scale would give people a reason to reflect on humanity's place in the universe and our responsibility to exist in harmony with the environment from which we evolved. Sagan's Pale Blue Dot proved that not only do we not have the answers; we can't even begin to imagine the questions.

Communicating this idea to the world was also a driving force for one of Sagan's fondest friends, the British author Arthur C Clarke. During a long career, in which he made distinguished contributions to both science fiction literature and actual scientific progress, one of the abiding themes throughout was the sheer inadequacy of human understanding next to the awesome sweep of time and space. Just as Sagan wished to pull the camera back and offer a new way of seeing our world, Clarke sought to do



SYNOPSIS



The human race in the late 20th Century is not given to considering its place in the infinite cosmos. But then, one day, the cosmos arrives on its doorstep

and removes all doubt. Fortunately, the 'Overlords' bring only messages of peace and co-operation, although their ultimate goal is rather less encouraging: to prevent the extinction of the human race.

Decades after their arrival, their presence now very much a fact of life, the Overlords reveal their true purpose: to serve 'the Overmind', a non-material being composed of the collective intelligence of ancient civilisations. The Overlords cannot join the Overmind, so they facilitate the transition for other species – like homo sapiens, for example. However, not everyone on Earth sees life beyond the corporeal realm as desirable. And then the tragic truth emerges: humanity has no choice.

the same in his stories, demolishing the constructed belief systems that offered easy solutions and placed humans at the centre of creation

"The rash assertion that 'God made man in His own image' is ticking like a time bomb at the foundation of many faiths, and as the hierarchy of the universe is disclosed to us, we may have to recognise this chilling truth: if there are any gods whose chief concern is man, they cannot be very important gods," Clarke wrote in his 1965 essay, 'Space And The Spirit Of Man'.

"We cannot predict the new forces, powers and discoveries that will be disclosed to us when we reach the other planets and set up new laboratories in space. They are as much beyond our vision today as fire or electricity would be beyond the imagination of a fish."

Fortunately, Arthur C Clarke seldom struggled in pushing his own imagination to such extremes. Born in 1917, when the space race, atomic bombs and genetic engineering were beyond all reasonable consideration, Clarke nevertheless found himself drawn to the sciences. He relished walking along the Somerset coastline near his home, transfixed by the tiny ecosystems at play in its "wonderland of rock pools." He stared for hours at the pictures of dinosaurs that adorned the

collectable cards that came free with his father's cigarettes. He built lavish constructions from the Meccano sets that topped his Christmas list for so many years. In his spare hours, he charted the surface of the moon, with only his own daydreams as a reference point.

However, it was literature that crystalised science as the defining interest of his life. Starting with pulp magazines like *Amazing Stories* – as so many teenagers of his time did – Clarke could soon be found perched on a stool in the local WH Smiths, devouring the back catalogue of HG Wells. Then, he found Olaf Stapledon, and nothing was ever the same again.

"I discovered *Last And First Men* soon after it was published in 1930," he said in an interview for the BBC's *Desert Island Discs*. "And this book – a history of the next 2,000 million years – had more influence on me than anything else I'd ever read. It opened my mind to the possibilities of time and space, and directly influenced many of my early books."

"IF THERE ARE ANY GODS WHOSE CHIEF CONCERN IS MAN, THEY CANNOT BE VERY IMPORTANT GODS" ARTHUR C CLARKE

Clarke's mind proved to be finely tuned to scientific ideas, particularly those concerning the nature of space and the possibility that humans might one day explore its furthest reaches. He became a member of the nascent British Interplanetary Society while he was still at school, and by the age of 20 he was using that knowledge to write science fiction stories. In 1945, Clarke's career as both a writer and science enthusiast received a considerable boost: in the former case, he sold his first short story, 'Rescue Party', to *Astounding Science Fiction*; in the latter, he published a technical paper in British science journal *Wireless World*, which detailed the possibility of global communications via a network of satellites in geosynchronous orbit above the Earth. Put another way, anyone who enjoys radio broadcasts, television networks and having a mobile phone owes the estate of Arthur C Clarke a debt of gratitude.

Many years later, Clarke would describe his *Wireless World* paper as "the most ➤

5 Reasons to read... *Childhood's End*

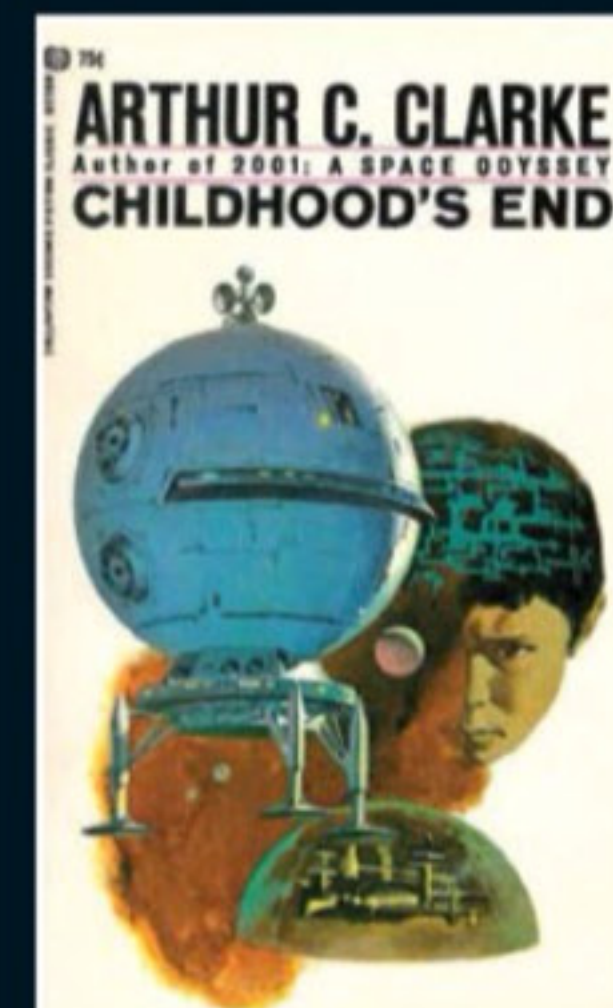
1 This is science fiction on the grandest scale, describing not just the story of a single character on Earth, but the fate of the entire human race. Clarke manages to make the story feel personal, but the stakes could not be higher.

2 This is allegedly the story that Stanley Kubrick first chose when he set out to make "the proverbial good science fiction movie." However, *Childhood's End* had already been optioned by a blacklisted writer, and so Kubrick and Clarke started from scratch.

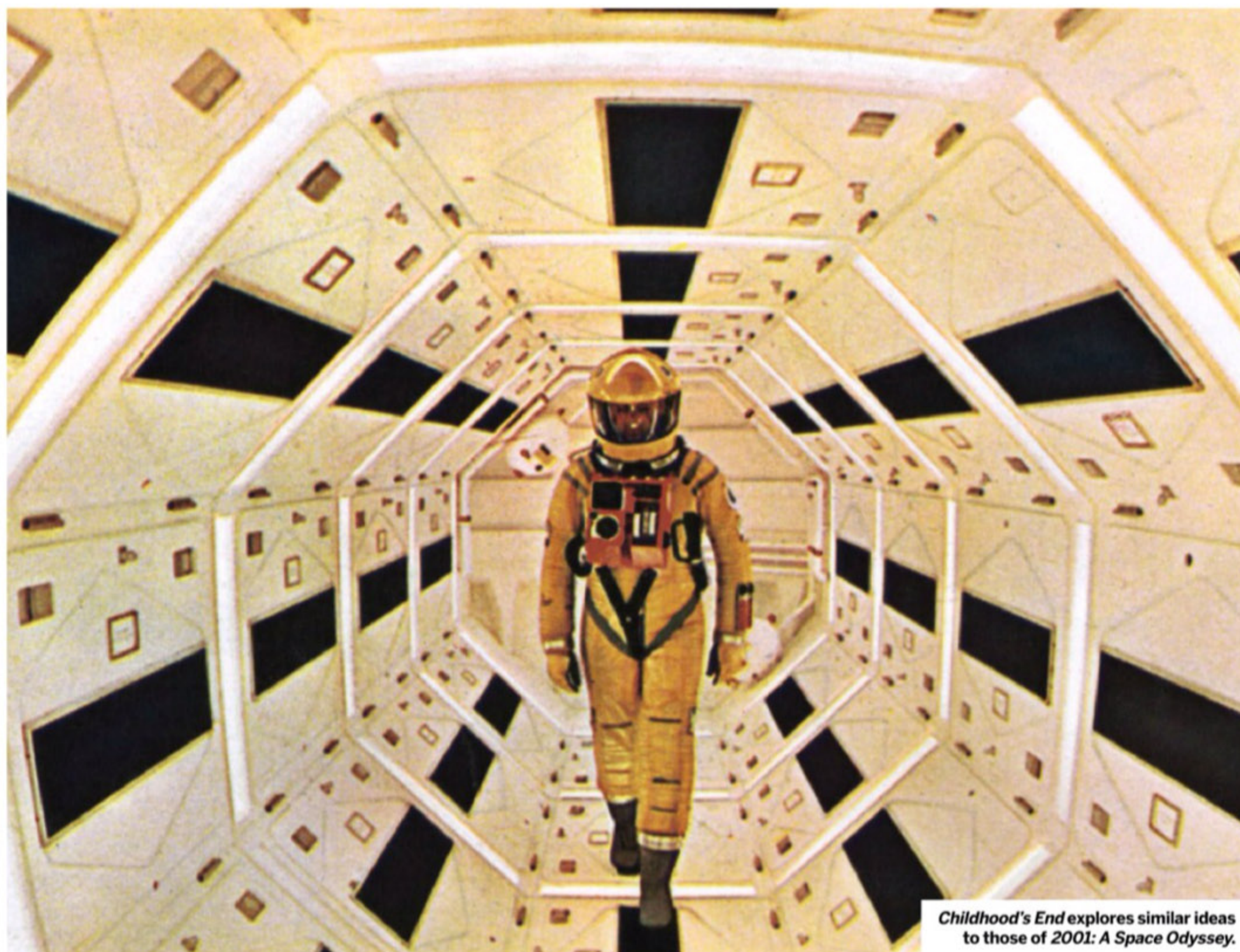
3 *Childhood's End* adopts an omniscient viewpoint, allowing Clarke to capture the scope of the story without getting bogged down in characterisation – never his strongest skill, and a consistent weakness when it comes to the rest of his work.

4 Clarke prided himself on his work's basis in the scientific facts and theories of the day. In this way, his stories are like wormholes back to bygone eras of scientific understanding – sometimes dated, but always fascinating.

5 He may be classified as 'hard' science fiction, but *Childhood's End* is an excellent example of the way Clarke's work constantly trips into sociology and philosophy. It isn't just about the feasibility of alien contact, but how the human condition might change as a result.



Like his other novels, it mirrors the time's level of scientific knowledge.



Childhood's End explores similar ideas to those of *2001: A Space Odyssey*.



Your Take On The Classic

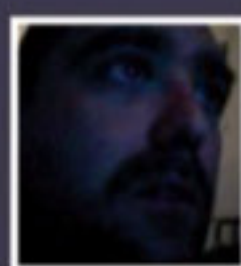
WHAT YOU
THOUGHT
@SCIFINOW



"Loved everything about it. #ChildhoodsEnd just finished last night. Only found

title cuz it is mentioned SO frequently conspiracy-wise."

@WarWizard



"Maybe one of his best, but I prefer 'The City On The Edge Of Forever'. I find Clarke is

somewhat overrated, dare I say it, but *Childhood's End* reads like it was written yesterday."

@minwagefourdoll



"Starts amazingly, gets a bit mad, then the ending is

terrifically unsettling."

@TomHuddleston



"Fantastic novel. Amazed it has never been made into a film. The giant spacecraft/city image endlessly copied."

@m_robertson_UK



"SyFy has bought the rights and is developing a mini-series (alongside RINGWORLD). I

am not optimistic." @Werthead



"Excellent though I haven't read it for some decades!"

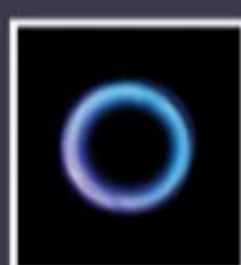
@HelmStone



"A brilliant allegory of how people become controlled by others and the

cost it can have on their lives."

@zanesmith2000



"It's brilliant, contemplating life through the classics."

@Happily_Street

What do you think? Let us
know on Twitter or Facebook

In response to the question of whether or not we're alone, *Childhood's End* provides a truly emphatic answer.



➤ important thing I ever wrote," though he also acknowledged his debt to the work of his forebears. "All of the mathematical elements in what I published were familiar to a great many people," he told *Playboy* in 1986. "I really don't take too much credit for that, because I know half a dozen people who, if I hadn't published the stuff in 1945, would have published it in 1946."

While he has never explicitly confirmed it, the events of 1945 seem to have been a catalyst for the symbiotic relationship between fact and fiction that would distinguish Clarke from so many of his peers. He never blanched from pushing his stories to the very limits of what the mind could conceive, but every tale, no matter how fanciful, germinated from a kernel of truth. Today, Clarke is recognised as the definitive 'scientist's science fiction writer', and there is more than enough supporting evidence: he has an asteroid named in his honour; the path travelled by the world's communications satellites is known as the 'Clarke Orbit'; he employed a slingshot technique to aid long-distance space travel in several of his stories, the very same technique used by Voyager II on its way to Neptune in 1977; and when the crew of Apollo 13 made it through their now-famous ordeal, Clarke received a message from an administrator at NASA that read, "Just as you always said it would be, Arthur."

But there is one tribute that trumps them all. When Apollo 8 returned to Earth after a successful attempt to orbit the Moon, a member of the crew confessed to Clarke that they had seriously discussed reporting to NASA the discovery of a huge black monolith on its dark side. The towering black monolith is, of course, an indelible

"WITH GREAT INTELLIGENCE WOULD ALSO GO COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING. I DO NOT CONSIDER THE EXISTENCE OF HIGHER INTELLIGENCE A THREAT" ARTHUR C CLARKE

image from Clarke's most famous novel, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. While Stanley Kubrick could stake a claim as co-author of the book – it was developed in conjunction with his classic 1968 film, with Clarke and Kubrick contributing ideas to both – *2001* nevertheless exemplifies Clarke's unique talent.

Famously, Clarke once stated that, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic," and that sense of wonder at the possibilities that might one day face humanity is what makes *2001* so captivating. Indeed, Clarke is quite open about his wish to free the minds of his readers from their earthly shackles, just as his had been freed by Stapledon all those years before.

"This universe is so incredible, and we constantly find new things out; but what we know may be such a small part of reality if, indeed, reality is finite – it may be infinite," he told *Playboy* in 1968. "One must always allow for the totally unexpected... I do try to allow for the idea that, as the famous scientist JBS Haldane once said, 'The universe is not only queerer than we suppose; it's queerer than we can suppose.'

"Things we take for granted now, such as transistor radios, that would be totally baffling, totally magical to even a man like Thomas Edison. I mean, if he saw a pocket

computer, Edison would go totally crazy. He'd spend his whole life trying to figure out, 'How does this work?'"

You could be forgiven for stopping at *2001: A Space Odyssey*; it is, to be fair, a masterpiece in both of its incarnations, but Clarke explored almost exactly the same ideas, with every bit as much clarity and imagination, almost 15 years before. *Childhood's End* started as a short story called 'Guardian Angel,' which was finally published in 1946 after a string of rejections and rewrites. But Clarke, sensing that he had touched upon a rich seam of subject matter, was not perturbed by the apparent indifference of the pulp magazines. The possibility of intelligent life other than human beings existing somewhere out in the cosmos had fascinated him since he was a child, but more fascinating still was the possibility of contact. What would a species with the technology to travel such enormous distances look like? How would they act towards lesser species? What incentive would they have to reach out to creatures that would appear to them – as the book's title suggests – as little different from animals' children? To answer any of those questions here would ruin much of what lends *Childhood's End* its power, but suffice to say, if you found *2001*'s themes of human evolution and physical transcendence intriguing, it's high time



you delved a little deeper into the work of Arthur C Clarke.

"I find it inspirational," Clarke said to WNYC's Patricia Marx in 1968, in response to a question about the possible discovery of an intelligence far superior to our own. "The only way you can make progress in any activity – in sport, in art, in science – is to realise there is something better than you are. I see nothing at all degrading in thinking that we are part of a cosmic or evolutionary process, between apes and angels, and that we have a long way to go yet. Our race is still very young. In terms of the age of the stars and the planets, we've only been here for a few minutes of cosmic time, so we're probably very primitive.

"So, is this a threat? It could be in some ways. Higher races may look down on us much as we look on mosquitoes or slugs or vermin. And who could blame them, with some of the things we've been doing? On the other hand, I think that with great intelligence would also go great compassion and understanding. I do not consider the existence of higher intelligence as a threat myself."

However, in the final analysis of *Childhood's End*, we can only conclude that Clarke's definition of 'threat' may differ radically from the norm. His 'Overlords' may ostensibly be visiting Earth to assist the human race in its evolution to a higher, more sophisticated plane of existence, but it would take a hard heart to argue that their methods are benevolent. A hard heart or, perhaps, the mind of a scientist who had spent half a lifetime looking to the stars and marvelling at how his own primitive species had managed to believe it was the fulcrum around which it all turned. If, as Clarke often argued, humanity is still only at the start of its evolutionary potential, reaching the next level might take the intervention of a superior force, and whatever sacrifices it deems necessary to get us there.

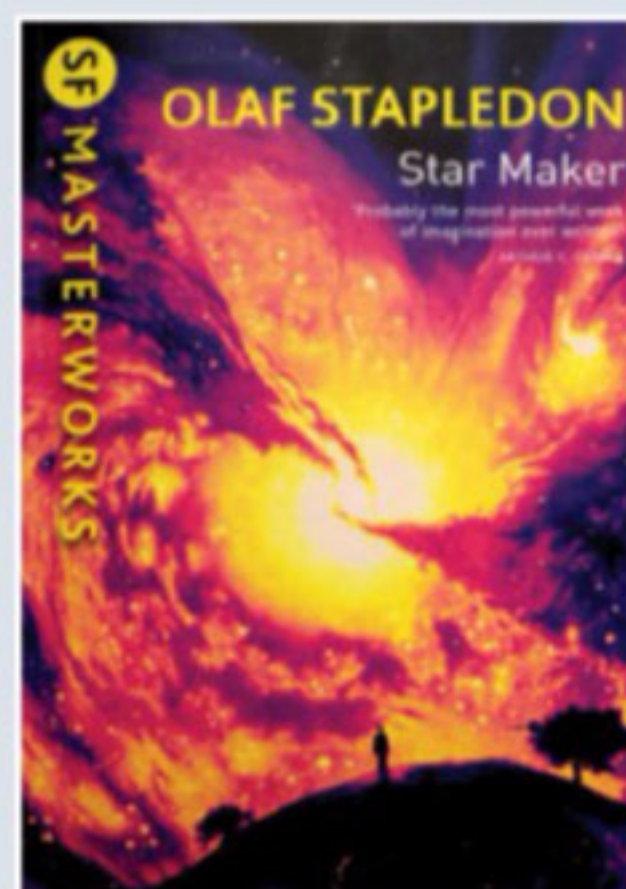
Or, to quote another of Clarke's famous phrases, "Two possibilities exist: either we are alone in the universe or we are not. Both are equally terrifying." ☞

Where Have I Seen This Before?

ABOVE AND BEYOND

STAR MAKER

Apart from HG Wells, no single writer had as great an influence on Clarke's work than Olaf Stapledon. Indeed, Clarke has declared Stapledon's *Star Maker* the greatest work of science fiction literature in history, and it explores many of the same themes as key works like *Childhood's End* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Brace yourself, though: *Star Maker*'s breadth is matched only by its innate weirdness.

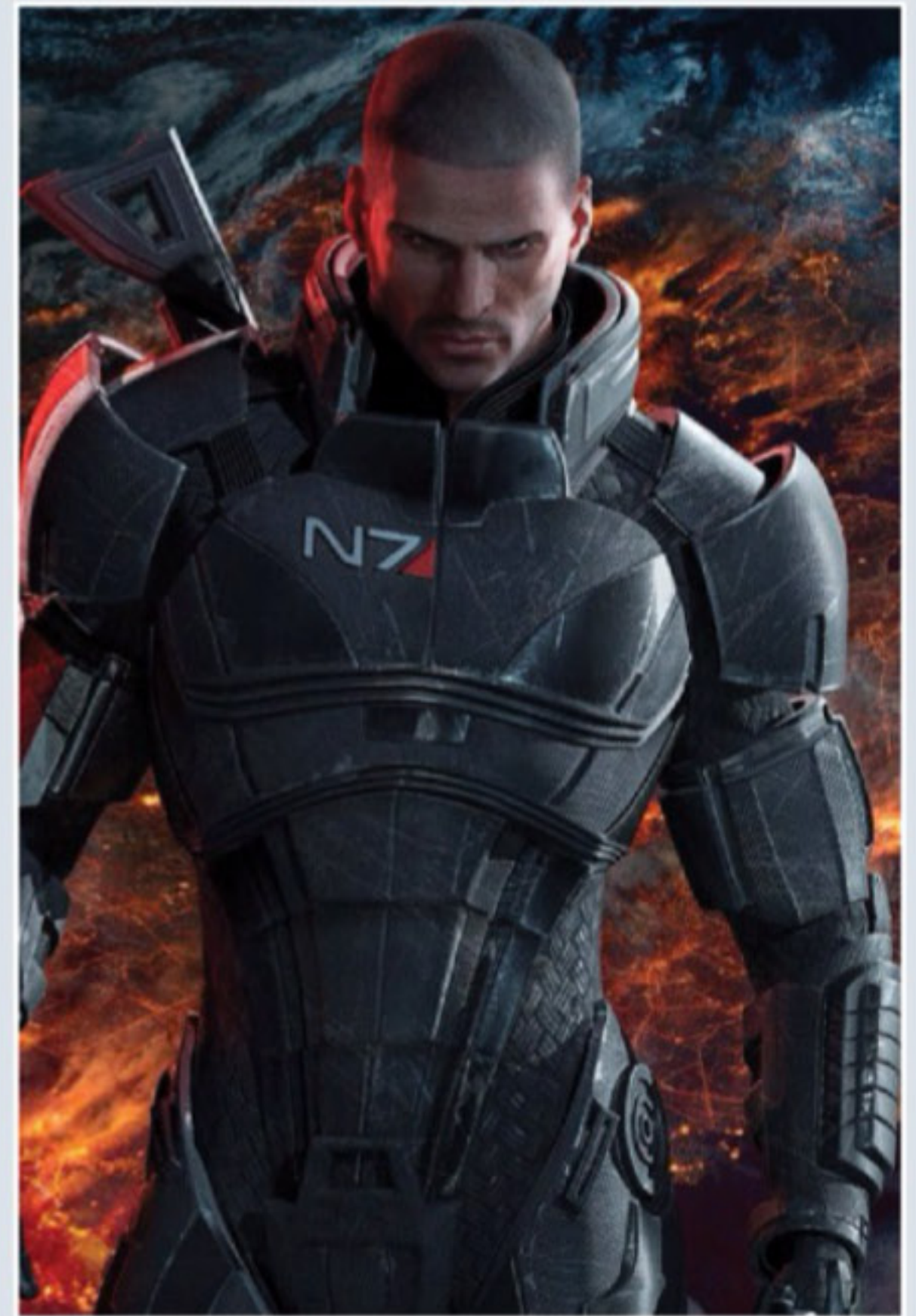


SOLARIS

Clarke's oeuvre straddles the line between hard and philosophical science fiction, but Stanislaw Lem falls in the latter camp. *Solaris* documents the attempt at communication between a team of scientists and a sentient planet, all undone by humanity's limited form and abilities. Like *Childhood's End*, *Solaris* reminds us of our place in such a vast and ancient universe.

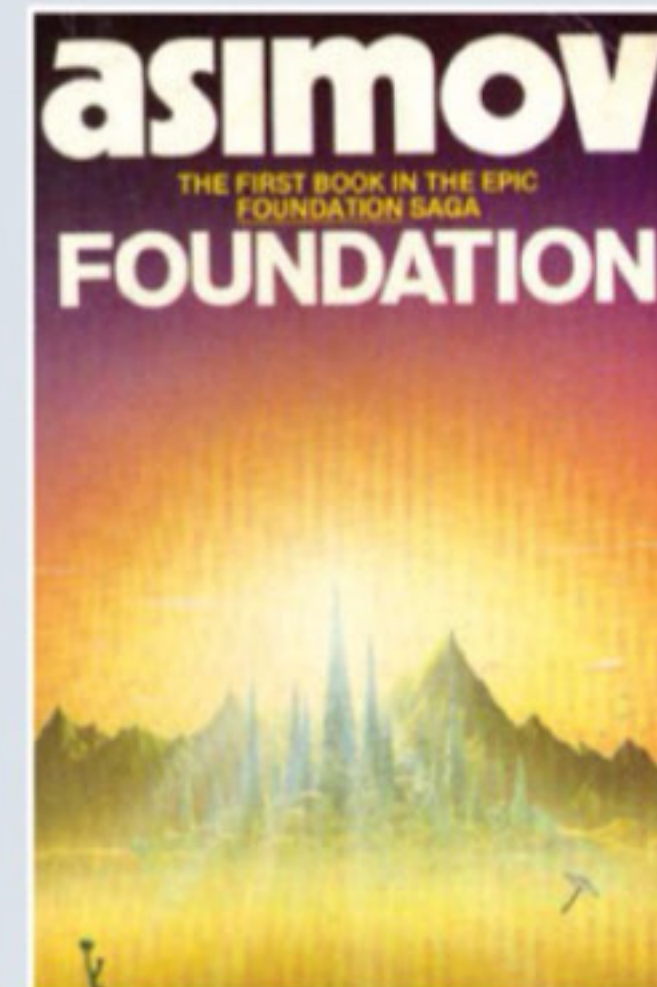
THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL

There is a strain of science fiction in which humanity is viewed as a lesser species on a cosmic scale. *Childhood's End* is a benevolent, elegiac take on that idea, but *The Day The Earth Stood Still* is more blunt. On the day we finally make contact, we'd better be ready for a stern lecture on anti-social behaviour.



MASS EFFECT

If you haven't played BioWare's excellent videogame trilogy, you won't necessarily spot the links to *Childhood's End*. However, if you have – spoilers – it's clear that Clarke's novel must have served as a source text for the underlying plot about an ancient alien race facilitating the development of life in the universe with their advanced technology.



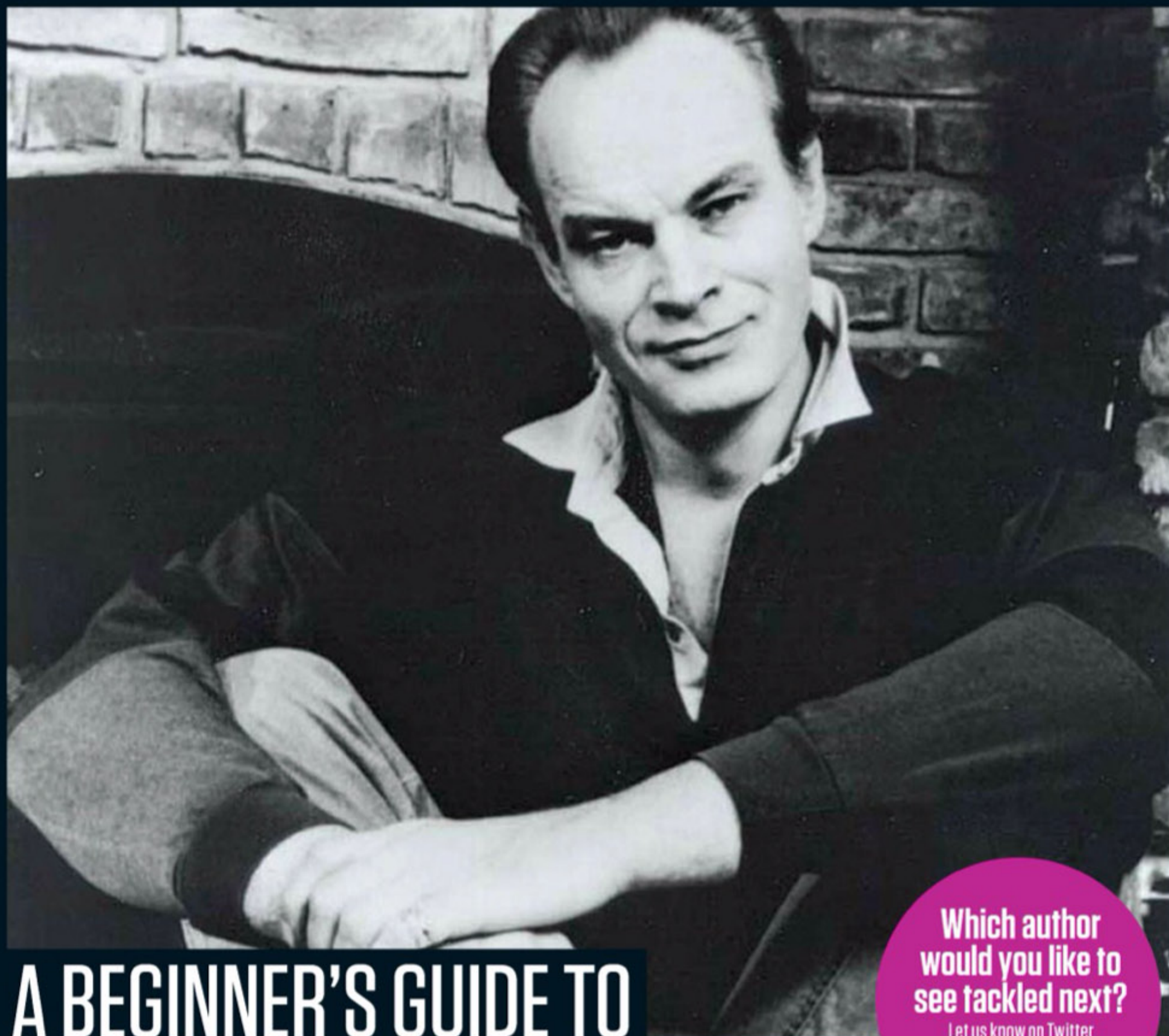
FOUNDATION

In a sense, Isaac Asimov's 1951 classic is the mirror opposite of *Childhood's End*. Both are concerned with the fate of humanity, but where Clarke uses extra-terrestrial intelligence as a catalyst for our survival, Asimov paints our species as more self-sufficient, establishing a colony of the brightest minds to act as a beacon of hope when all around starts to decay.

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

Both Clarke's novel and Kubrick's film are classics, but *2001: A Space Odyssey* was crafted during a period of astounding symbiotic creativity. Indeed, Clarke only attempted the book as a way of writing a better script. Nevertheless, *2001* is, in cinematic form, a masterpiece, exploring many of the same ideas as *Childhood's End*.





A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO DAVID GEMMELL

The king of British heroic fantasy

Heroic fantasy speaks to a need for justice and balance: right and wrong, good and evil. At the heart of that tradition is the need for a hero to rise up, make things better and become a shining beacon.

Growing up in a tough area of west London, David Gemmell was bullied for being fatherless, but found his hero in his stepfather, Bill. When Gemmell woke up screaming that a vampire was in his room, instead of reassuring him that they weren't real, Bill said, "Yeah. I broke its bloody neck. I won't have no vampires in my house."

His stepfather encouraged him to stand up for himself, and when Gemmell created his most famous character, Druss the Axeman, it was Bill who provided the template.

At the age of 28, Gemmell was diagnosed with cancer, and threw his energy into writing a novel before he died. He wrote the *Siege of Dros Delnoch*, a battle with as overwhelming odds as he believed he was facing in life. The diagnosis

"I CONCENTRATE ON LOVE, LOYALTY AND REDEMPTION"

proved false, and his manuscript was expanded into *Legend* – the first of the Drenai Saga.

As a former journalist, he had an eye for pithy dialogue, and was influenced by no-win scenarios from history like the Alamo. He wrote page-turners, dark and

dangerous worlds where lone and tortured heroes faced seemingly insurmountable odds and enjoyed Pyrrhic victories. His protagonists are flawed yet honourable, and there is always hope for redemption.

His work is sometimes characterised as 'macho', and while he drew from his experience of London hardmen, he was more positive about his storytelling. "I tend to concentrate on courage, loyalty, love and redemption. I believe in these things. I refuse to be cynical about the world."

Gemmell wrote over 30 novels, including 11 Drenai stories. He died in 2006 before completing *Troy: Fall Of Kings*, the third in a trilogy about the Trojan War. His wife Stella completed the book, and it was published posthumously.

Which author would you like to see tackled next?

Let us know on Twitter or Facebook



Living the Legend

QUOTES FROM DAVID GEMMELL'S NOVELS

"THERE'S NO SHAME IN FEAR. BUT UNDERSTAND THIS – THE COWARD IS RULED BY FEAR, WHILE THE HERO RIDES IT LIKE A WILD STALLION"

DARK MOON

"NEVER VIOLATE A WOMAN, NOR HARM A CHILD. DO NOT LIE, CHEAT OR STEAL. THESE THINGS ARE FOR LESSER MEN. PROTECT THE WEAK AGAINST THE EVIL STRONG, AND NEVER ALLOW THOUGHTS OF GAIN TO LEAD YOU INTO THE PURSUIT OF EVIL. NEVER BACK AWAY FROM AN ENEMY. EITHER FIGHT OR SURRENDER. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO SAY I WILL NOT BE EVIL. EVIL MUST BE FOUGHT WHEREVER IT IS FOUND"

LEGEND

"YOU COULD SPEND A LIFETIME TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE WORKS OF EVIL MEN. THEIR JOYS ARE NOT OURS. THEY LOVE TO INFLECT PAIN, CREATE SUFFERING, CAUSE HARM AND DEATH. IT EMPOWERS THEM, FOR BENEATH THE SKIN THEY ARE EMPTY AND WORTHLESS"

TROY: LORD OF THE SILVER BOW

"NOT ONE OF THE CREATURES OF BLOOD CAN ESCAPE DEATH. WE ALL FACE IT, AND SUCCUMB TO IT. IT FOLLOWS US LIKE A DARK SHADOW. YET IF WE LIVE IN TERROR OF IT, THEN WE DO NOT LIVE AT ALL. YES WE ARE BORN ALONE, AND YES WE WILL DIE ALONE. BUT IN BETWEEN, TAE, WE LIVE. WE KNOW JOY"

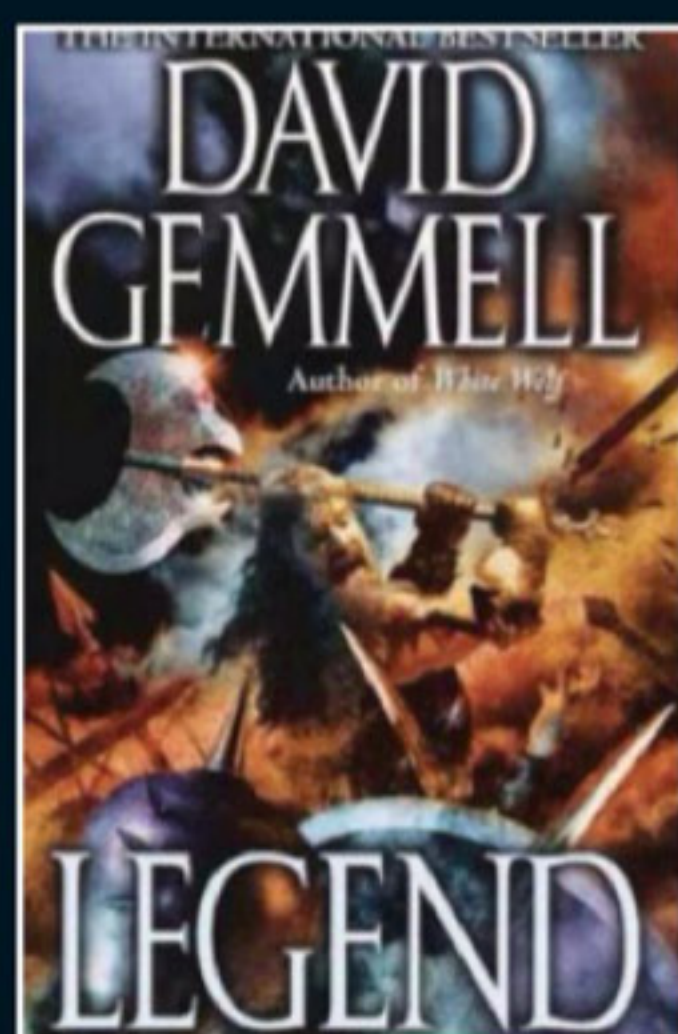
THE SWORD IN THE STORM



Like in George RR Martin's *A Song Of Ice And Fire*, Gemmell's characters exhibit moral shades of grey.



300 has all the makings of a Gemmell novel, with its emphasis on honour and strength against impossible odds.



Birth of a legend

Heroic fantasy against extreme odds

LEGEND
Publisher: Orbit
Published: 1984
Price: £8.99

Gemmell's first novel was reportedly his favourite. "It was all the heart, and contains just

about everything I believe in," he said of his debut, and it's a classic of the fantasy genre. The old warrior coming out of retirement plot could be plodding in less capable hands, but Gemmell brings energy and vigour to this world. In Druss he paints the picture of a strong, courageous and honourable man defying the odds. This title comes later on in the Drenai Saga for those with an eye on chronology, but otherwise it's a great place to start.

🐦 "Druss: he's old, tired, and seen more war and fighting than any man should ever see – what a character, leaps off the page. #BookClub" @dept42



Seeking redemption

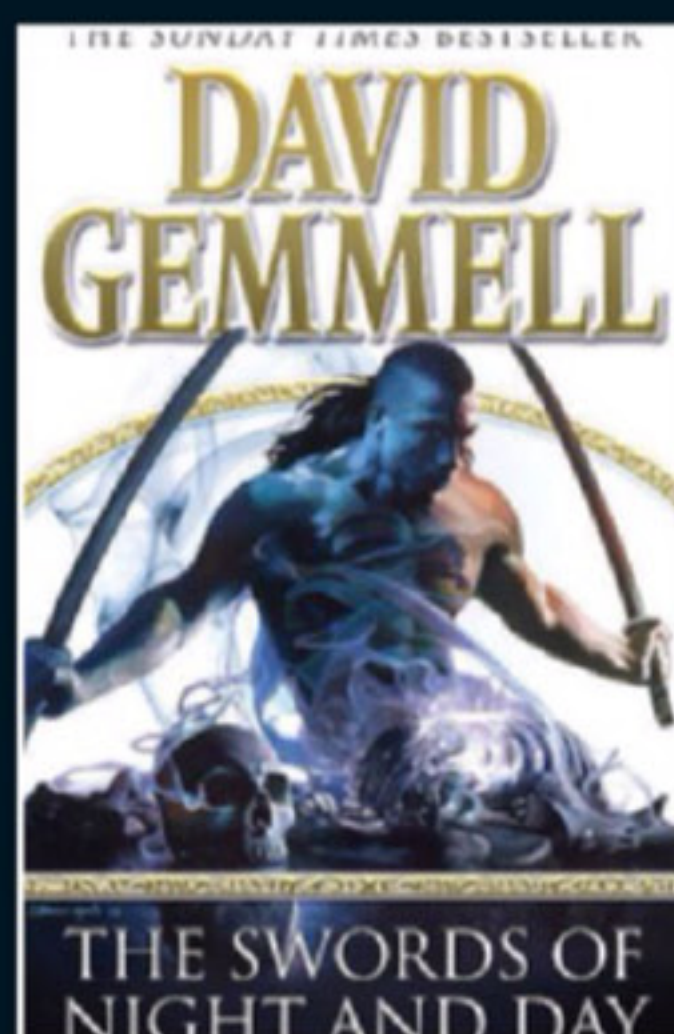
Darkest just before the dawn

WAYLANDER
Publisher: Orbit
Published: 1986
Price: £8.99

The power of redemption permeates much of Gemmell's work, the earliest example

of which is *Waylander*. At first glance, anti-hero Waylander is an amoral assassin and traitor, but when invaders overrun the land he becomes an unlikely hero, entrusted with the quest to find the Armour of Bronze, a symbol of hope. Waylander is more morally complex than Druss, although they share similar burdens. A tragic back story emerges over the course of the novel, making his search for deliverance all the more powerful.

🐦 "Waylander is a proper conflicted, reluctant hero with an ambivalent moral compass and kicks ass so well. #BookClub" @JamesAdversary



Heroes reborn

Protect the weak against the evil strong

THE SWORDS OF NIGHT AND DAY
Publisher: Corgi
Published: 2004
Price: £7.99

The final Drenai book sees protagonist Skilgannon reborn 1,000 years in the future. He and a resurrected Druss fight against the Jiamads, a splicing of man and beast controlled by Skilgannon's former lover Jianna. You have to feel for them; even after death they can't find peace. Gemmell shows skill at balancing violence with opulent, character-enriching dialogue. Skilgannon returns with more to say for himself, and by mixing things up with the setting, Gemmell gives himself scope to explore the character further.

🐦 "The Swords Of Night And Day is bloody brilliant. I really liked the concepts of the swords. #BookClub" @LibraryTasha



The reluctant hero

Jarek Mace: a hero in spite of himself

MORNINGSTAR
Publisher: Orbit
Published: 1992
Price: £8.99

This dark take on the Robin Hood myth shows that heroes can be forged out of the most unlikely candidates. Self-interested mercenary Jarek Mace becomes a kind of folk hero as his exploits are spun into something more gallant by a down-on-his-luck bard. Mace begins to resent his new persona, but eventually lives up to his own legend. Gemmell himself was conscious that there was power in creating heroes that inspire, and *Morningstar* perhaps reflects that best. It's also a riveting, action-packed read that touches on love, honour and self-sacrifice.

🐦 "A flawed hero is my favourite hero, and Gemmell delivers that here. #BookClub" @Emmapaige13



To hell with Homer

His last novel becomes a farewell to arms

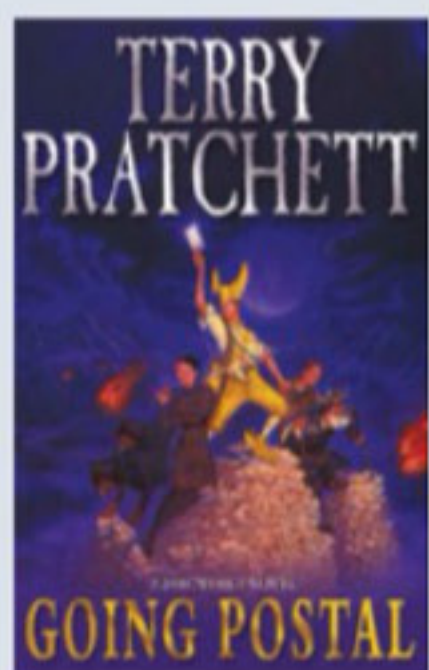
TROY: FALL OF KINGS
Publisher: Corgi
Published: 2007
Price: £7.99

The *Troy* trilogy comes to a close in what would be Gemmell's last novel. Completed by his wife Stella after his death in 2006 based on notes and conversations, *Troy: Fall Of Kings* shows the author at the height of his powers. No side is wholly good or evil, and Gemmell doesn't rely on Homer for plot development. He carves out his own story for the likes of Hector, Achilles and Odysseus, and the end result is an exploration of valour, courage and the horrors of war. If historical epic floats your boat then the *Troy* series is one to investigate.

🐦 "Grippingly written, even in a familiar story many twists leave you guessing. Couldn't put them down. #BookClub." @thelifeof_rose

Your Five Fantasy Intrigues

CHOOSE YOUR TOP FIVE
@SCIFINOW ON TWITTER

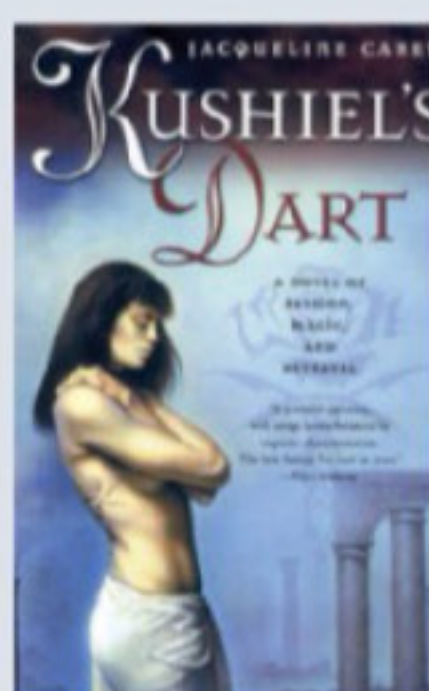


1. Going Postal

Terry Pratchett

"Or anything with Lord Vetinari in. Because Lord Vetinari. #BookClub"

@Tim_McNulty

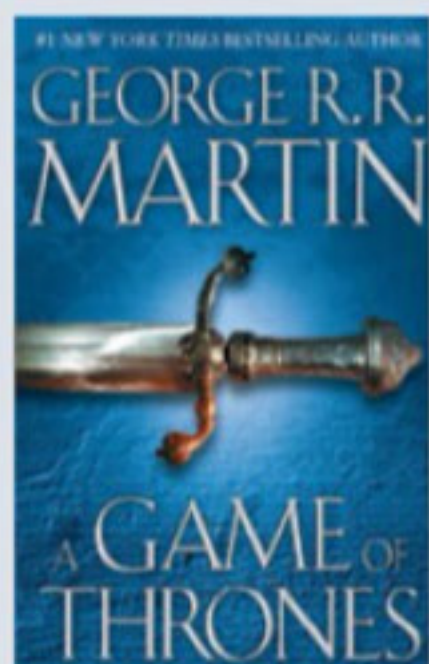


2. Kushiel's Dart

Jacqueline Carey

"Beautifully written. It's slow, but it's not about being fast-paced and thrilling. #BookClub"

@EwaSR



3. A Game Of Thrones

George RR Martin

"A Game Of Thrones is my fave Machiavellian fantasy book. Like in real life, you are often having to second-guess motives. #BookClub"

@AJWSmith



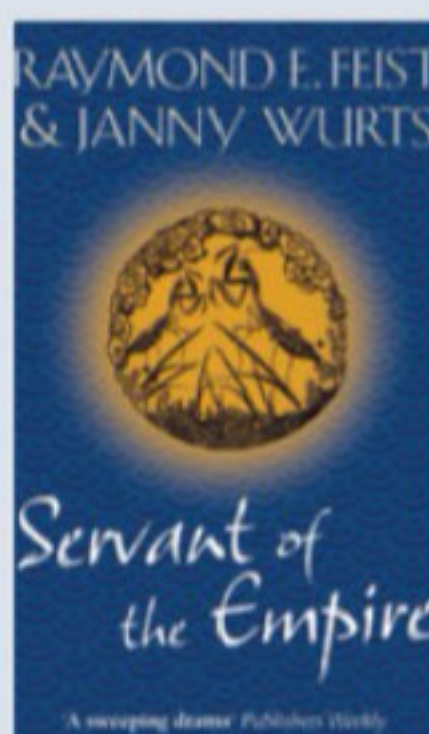
4.

Swordpoint

Ellen Kushner

"Features gay and bisexual characters, which is always a plus! #BookClub"

@yoritomo_reiko



5. Servant Of The Empire

Raymond E Feist/Jenny Wurts

"Matriarchal society, good world building. Sexiness without being gratuitous. It's a #classic. #BookClub"

@LibraryTasha

Details Author: Den Patrick Publisher: Gollancz Price: £20

THE BOY WITH THE PORCELAIN BLADE

SCIFINOW
Must read now!

The Orfano's War-Fighting Manual

Something is rotten in the kingdom of Landfall, to paraphrase a very different sword and skullduggery romp. This much is clear early on in Den Patrick's debut novel, *The Boy With The Porcelain Blade*. The king is insane and has withdrawn from society to his private keep. His shady steward, the Majordomo, rules in his stead, while the Great Houses of the aristocracy plot for power. The peasants in the countryside report young girls missing, but the authorities do nothing about it. Then there are the Orfano, the misshapen witchlings that are abandoned on the nobles' doorsteps every few years.

Our entry point into this dark web of Machiavellian conspiracies and mysteries is one such Orfano,

Lucien de Fontein. Born with no ears, he has grown up hated and feared, making him a very angry young man. Fortunately, this rage has also made him quite adept with a sword. The novel opens on the day he is to face his Final Testing, which will allow him to graduate from the titular porcelain blade to a steel weapon. However,

leaves Lucien and the other Orfano fighting for their lives and exposes a dark secret at the heart of the kingdom.

Set in a grotesque caricature of Renaissance Italy, this will appeal to fans of Robin Hobb, Scott Lynch and Jon Courtenay Grimwood. Patrick's writing is rich with detail, describing the intricacies of every finely tailored

"THE MANIFOLD MYSTERIES MAKE THIS A FINELY CRAFTER THRILLER"

the senior sword master Giancarlo stacks the odds against him so he fails his exam. When Lucien attacks his superior, he triggers a chain reaction that brings insurrection to Landfall,

doublet and the extent of every ruined battlement. This fits perfectly with the baroque setting, while fast-paced plotting ensures it isn't a slog.

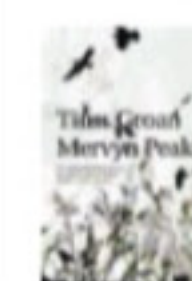
The Boy With The Porcelain Blade alternates between Lucien fighting for survival and flashbacks to his youth. While this can make the early chapters difficult to follow, the flashbacks offer insight into this world. Patrick teases out revelations, and ends every action scene on a cliffhanger in such way that the novel is always riveting.

While Lucien and the other Orfano feel like fully sketched personalities, many of the large cast of characters are in much broader strokes and often feel nebulously defined. However, Patrick should be praised for writing strong female characters, such as Lucien's love interest Rafela and the fearsomely intelligent Anea, as well as subverting the classic damsel-in-distress plot.

Without giving away spoilers, it's fair to say that the manifold mysteries that drive *The Boy With The Porcelain Blade* are all resolved, making this a finely crafted thriller. However, this is book one of the *Erebus Sequence* trilogy, so Patrick reserves the right to throw up a whole new set of questions about Landfall's past and uncertain future.

Jack Parsons

VERDICT ★★★★★

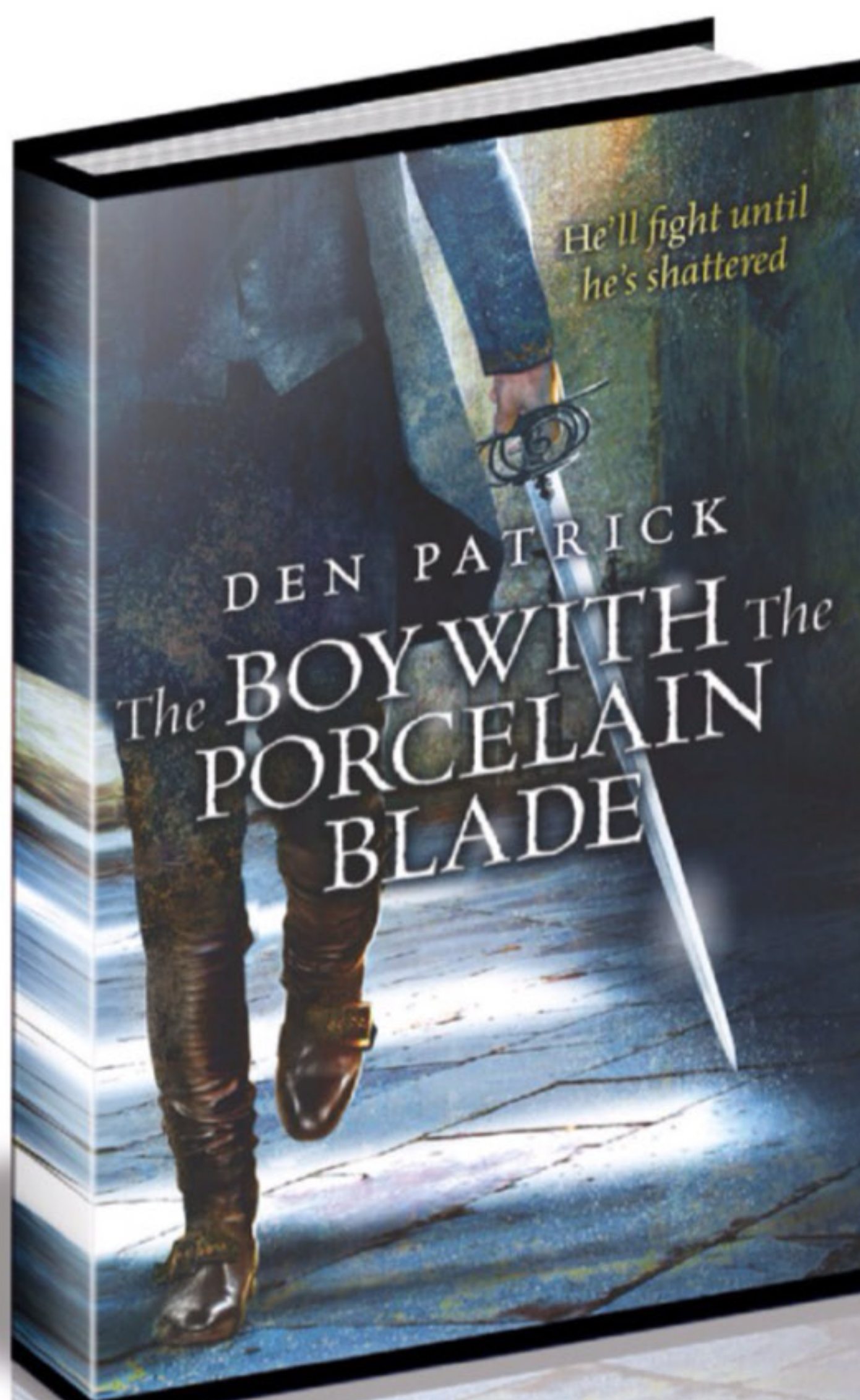


IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Titus Groan

Mervyn Peake

Cited as a major influence by Den Patrick, try the grotesque *Gormenghast* series for yourself.



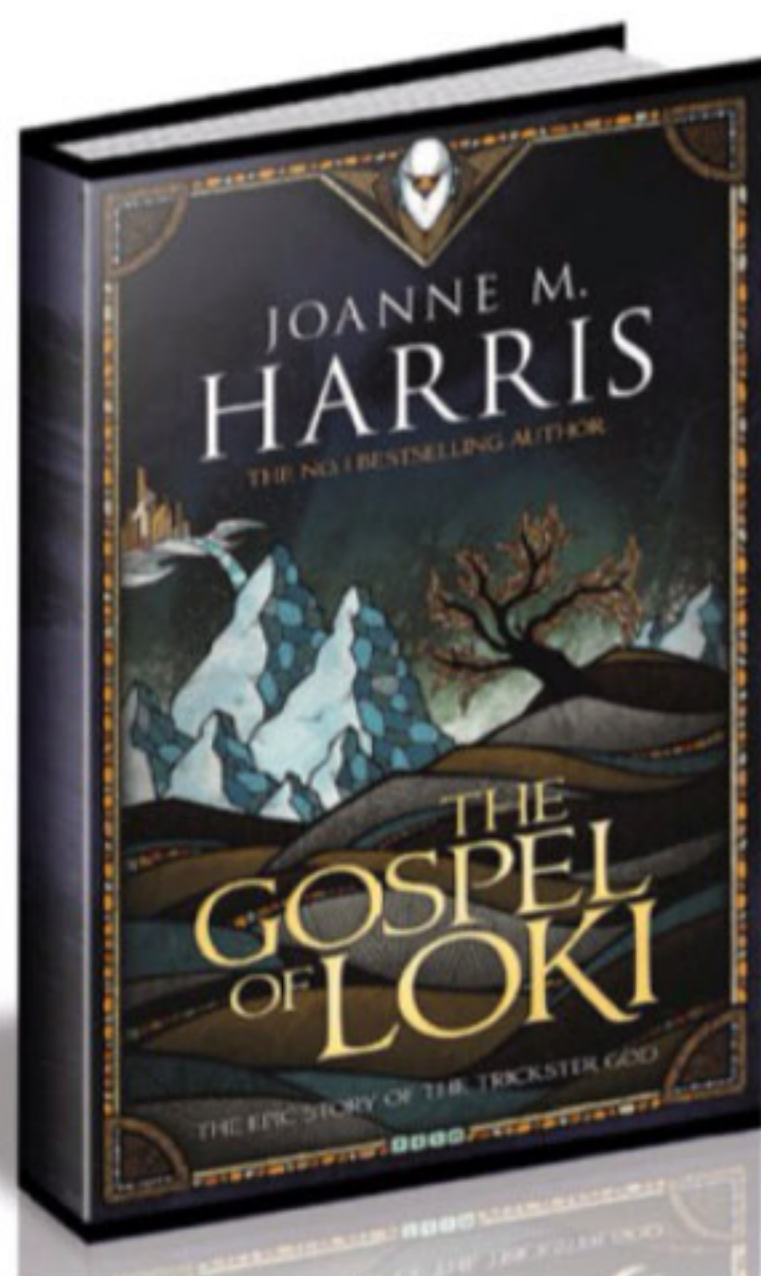
Details Author: Joanne M Harris Publisher: Gollancz Price: £14.99

THE GOSPEL OF LOKI

The secret history

Norse gods are enjoying a bit of a revival at the moment, as the blonde-haired, blue-eyed, musclebound Thor brings his hammer down with the Avengers. However, ask anyone, and they'll tell you it's Loki who gets all the best lines, so it's about time someone gave him his own story.

Author Joanne Harris, making her fantasy debut after bestsellers



like *Chocolat*, takes on the Norse myth rather than Marvel, establishing Loki as a witty, embittered and misunderstood (but not really) deity who wants to give his side of the story. Over the course of the novel, Loki relates how he was pulled from Chaos by Odin and became the most hated

with Odin a mistrustful business partner and Thor a dull-witted oaf who's only useful in a fight.

If there's a problem, it's that Harris' touch is too light. The language she chooses to tell the story is often idiosyncratic, with phrases like "That is so Loki" possibly clashing with some

"HARRIS' LOKI IS A HIGHLY ENTERTAINING NARRATOR"

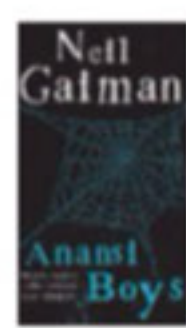
man in Asgard. Even when he gets something right his genius isn't fully acknowledged, so who can blame him for turning against his adopted family and possibly initiating the end of the world?

By retelling the old folk tales, *The Gospel Of Loki's* structure is inevitably quite episodic. Harris' Loki is a highly entertaining narrator, however, and she ensures that a throughline of character development is kept up throughout. Seeing the gods through his eyes is great fun,

readers' ideas of what Norse gods should sound like. It's very much in keeping with Harris' storytelling style, though, and it should open up these stories to younger readers. *The Gospel Of Loki* moves at a cracking pace, and it's a lot of fun.

Jonathan Hatfull

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Anansi Boys

Neil Gaiman

This companion piece to *American Gods* is lighter, funnier and altogether sillier.

Writer: Jen Williams Publisher: Headline Price: £13.99

THE COPPER PROMISE

Do not disturb: ancient gods sleeping!

Anyone who has ever woken a sleeping teenager will empathise with the wrath incurred by Lord Frith and his companions, as their careless antics unwittingly disturb a terror that has been imprisoned and dormant for a long time.

Seeking vengeance and, unable to settle his score alone, Frith employs the services of disgraced knight Sebastian and his sidekick Wydrin, both of who will do pretty much anything for gold and the opportunity to slice up some baddies. Their bawdy, bloodthirsty road trip leads them to a legendary citadel, where they encounter bizarre creatures, hidden secrets and treachery, not to mention the aforementioned terror. However, this is merely the beginning.

The three central characters are realistically flawed, making them both human and likeable. Wydrin, with her rash decisions and face-value ethics, is a welcome relief from the busty, long-haired lovelies that mainly frequent epic fantasies. Similarly, Sebastian's tale isn't quite the expected fall from grace, and adds a different side to his character. The fact that author Jen Williams allows the knight to share this later rather than sooner lets the reader focus on his current journey.

Originally released as four separate novellas, *The Copper Promise* gloriously combines them together as one satisfying novel. Initially, it proves a daunting read, with an epic (though not quite Tolkienesque)



535 pages of relentless and exhausting action, but Williams' fast-paced narrative never leaves room for a pause and captivates from page one.

Claire Nicholls

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

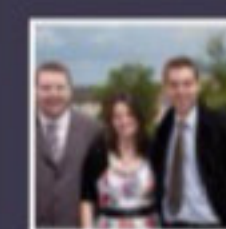
The Grim Company

Luke Scull

A dark fantasy full of demons and despair. Hope lies in a band of rebels with a destiny to fulfil.

YOUR READS

What you lot have been reading this month



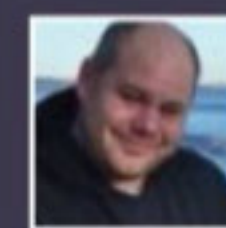
"I'm re-reading the *X-Wing* series by Michael Stackpole. Still excellent 20 years later! #BookClub" @HanCianSolo77



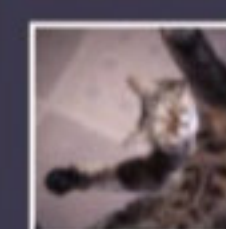
"I'm going through @refeist's *Riftwar* trilogy again, this time on tablet rather than paper form. #BookClub" @FantasyMeister



"I'm reading the *Doctor Who* graphic novels, *Prisoners Of Time* #BookClub" @quidditysea



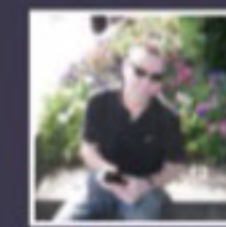
"Am completely and utterly engrossed by Neil Gaiman's *The Ocean At The End Of The Lane*! A truly exceptional work! #BookClub" @Peter_J_Lewis



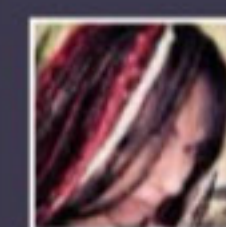
"I'm reading the fifth book in Jim Butcher's *Other* series – *Codex Alera :D* #BookClub" @Pussinabox



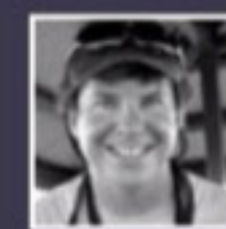
"I'm reading *Wizard And Glass*, book four of Stephen King's *Dark Tower* books, love them all so far :) #BookClub" @whiskeyrich



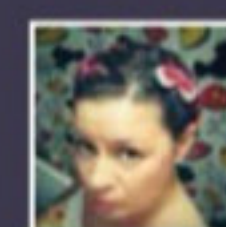
"*Marvel Comics: The Untold Story* by Sean Howe, my respect for Frank Miller went up tenfold. Plenty of horror in there. #BookClub" @mockery66



"Since I felt empty after completing #WoT I have been reading every Terry Brooks book in sequence. Currently on *Armageddon's Children*. #BookClub" @BinnySedal



"The *Red Dwarf Omnibus* with a vindaloo and a poppadum bookmark! #BookClub" @MSidKelly



"Finally read *The Hobbit* on my hols last week. I hate myself for being so late to the party! Great story all the same. #BookClub" @Barbiegirl_44



"I'm currently reading Freda Warrington's *A Dance in Blood Velvet*, and her writing style is awesome, frankly. Her prose = gorgeous. #BookClub" @mangozoid

Tell us what you're reading on Twitter or Facebook



60 SECONDS WITH

Tom Grieves



What's the difference between writing for a TV show like *Being Human* and writing your novels?

There are more similarities than differences. When I wrote my first novel

Sleepwalkers, I thought, "Now I can make my art." And my book editor cut out all the 'art' and turned it into a proper thriller! I think the classic difference between a novel and a screenplay is that the first starts inside a character's head and looks out, while a screenplay starts with the camera and looks in.

How would you pitch *A Cry In The Night* to fans of your TV work?

When I'm feeling cheeky, I tell people that this is a book about women who eat children. In actual fact, it's about two children who go missing from a remote village in the Lake District. Several hundred years before, a group of women had been drowned as witches in the nearby lake, and the myth and rumour of witches still remains on the locals' lips. The lead detective, Sam, begins to wonder whether there is modern-day witchcraft at work.

"I TRY TO USE THE SUPERNATURAL TO EXAMINE REAL LIFE"

Crime fiction often lends itself effectively to supernatural undertones. What do you enjoy the most about blending genres?

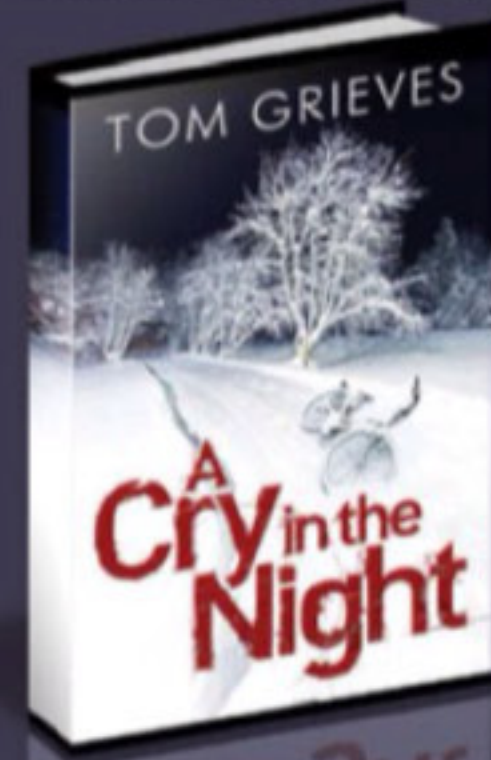
It's fun for me to take the normal and the supernatural and, as you say, 'blend them'. *Being Human* always did this fantastically well – a ghost and a werewolf arguing about baked beans, etc. But what I also try to do is use the supernatural as a way of examining real life and real emotions. It allows me to explore difficult subjects with a fresh light.

Witches and tales of witchcraft seem to be enjoying a bit of a comeback at the moment. What was it about them that appealed to you?

Well, for me the appeal came very directly and obviously. We bought a collection of Roald Dahl audiobooks, and one of our favourites

was *The Witches*. I just thought there had to be a way of dramatising witches which wasn't silly and arch; which could be genuinely thrilling.

A Cry In The Night is available now from Quercus.



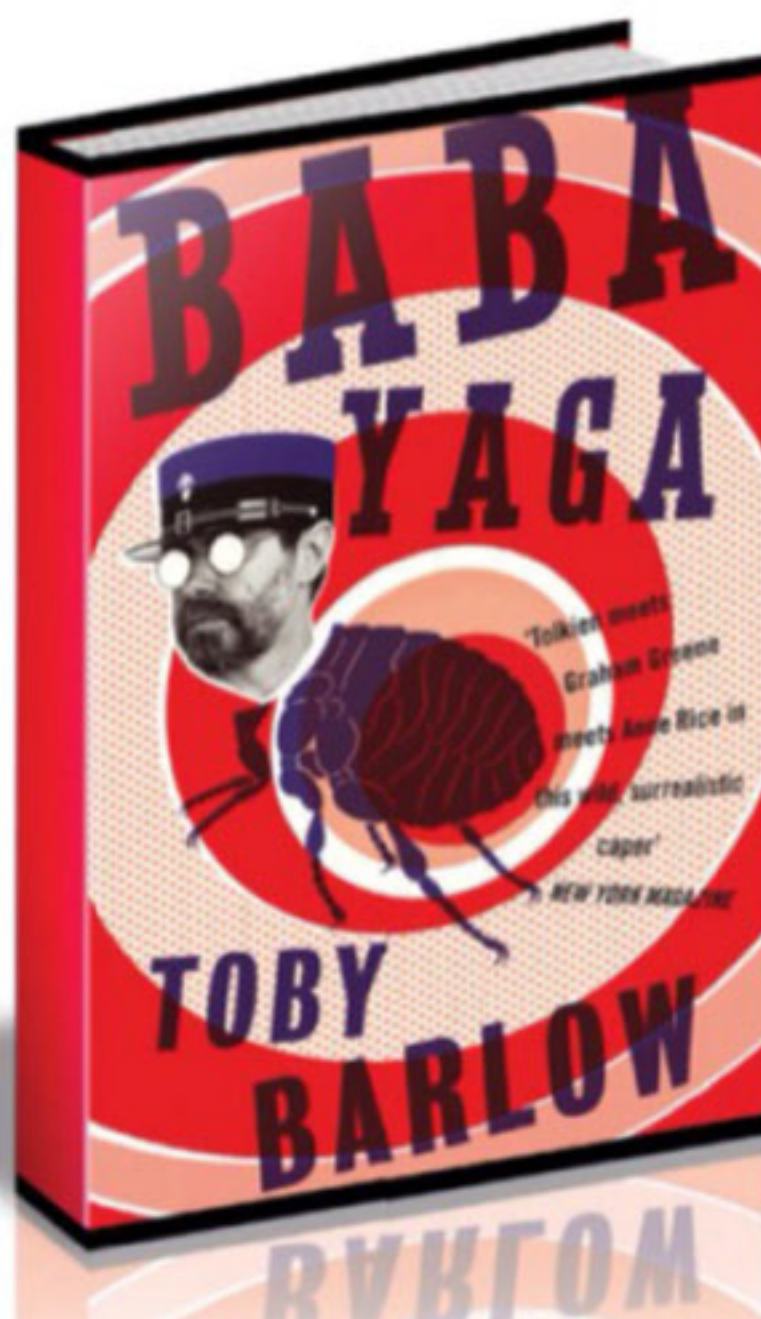
Details Author: Toby Barlow Publisher: Corvus Price: £12.99

BABA YAGA

Witching hour in Paris

SciFiNow
Must read now!

American writers have always been drawn to Paris as an ideal, both in terms of romance and creativity. Toby Barlow's *Baba Yaga* explores both these themes, as his wonderfully inventive story takes in Russian witches, American spies,



heart-sick ad-men and a French detective who is turned into a flea.

Our principal characters are Will, a young advertising executive from Detroit who is preparing to leave Paris, and Zoya, a beautiful Russian witch who has been preying on the men of the city for decades. When Zoya gets on the wrong side of her hot-tempered elder Elga and Will becomes embroiled in a CIA conspiracy, their paths cross and become entangled in a web of spells, spies and seduction.

If this all sounds like a bit of a romp then that's because it is. Barlow invests a lot of time in fleshing out the murky past of his baba yagas, and there's plenty of leisurely contemplation of Paris' place in the modern world, the deterioration of Detroit and relationships. At times, however, *Baba Yaga* is a little too leisurely, as if the author is luxuriating in the world he's created for too long.

Regardless, it's great fun. Will and Zoya's stories are combined with those of the splenetic Elga, dandy hustler Oliver and the aforementioned Inspector Vidot, who goes through a Kafka-esque transformation. The plot itself is slight, but *Baba Yaga* is about the enjoyment of the journey. The little details that litter the narrative, from Elga's elaborate witchcraft to the life of a couple running a flea circus, are so endearing that it's hard to blame the author for enjoying himself.

Baba Yaga is a funny, charming and well-constructed novel that blends its elements beautifully to make a bewitching piece of work.

Jonathan Hatfull

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

The Yiddish Policemen's Union
Michael Chabon
Chabon's alternate history sees the state of Israel established in Alaska.

Details Author: Simon Ings Publisher: Gollancz Price: £14.99

WOLVES

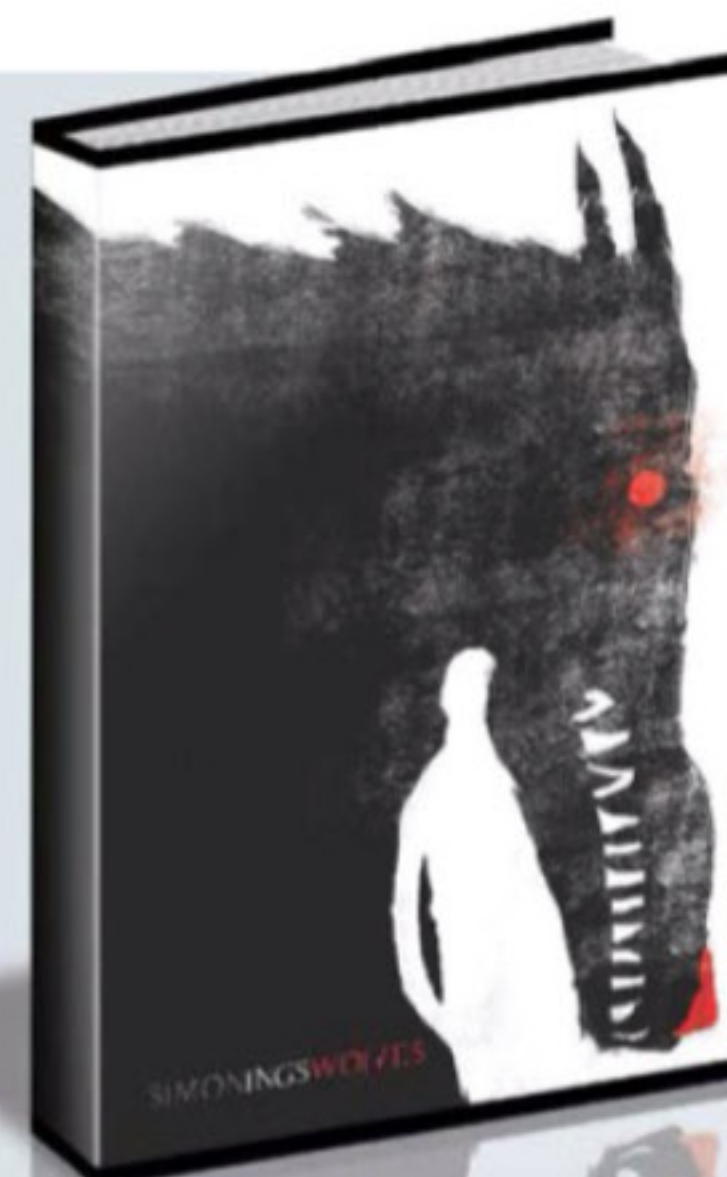
Too many words, not enough action

Wolves is the kind of novel that is only really enjoyed by those with the energy and enthusiasm to read between the lines and invent a hypothesis of their own to explain what the bloody hell is going on.

In theory, author Simon Ings explores the idea of Augmented Reality (a technology that coats the real world with a digital illusion) through the eyes of central character Conrad, a young man with painful childhood memories and a seriously messed up adulthood. Conrad longs to unearth the truth behind his mother's death, but his journey of discovery involves confronting some deeply suppressed emotions and truly twisted encounters.

Augmented Reality aside, *Wolves* may be more acceptable as a 'whodunit'. The mystery of Conrad's mother is more of a pull than the baffling science fiction element, which quite frankly feels as though it has been chucked in as bit of cross-curricular genre exploitation.

The narrative is loaded with text, but pages seem to stretch on for eternity without anything of consequence happening, necessitating countless re-reads to ensure important events have not been missed. Do not fall into this trap; you will have missed nothing other than being assured that the "fridge is next to the back door" and "on top of the fridge is a radio." Ings might have been better off spending more time

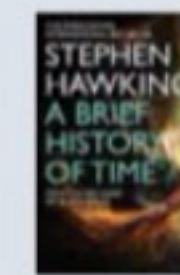


on clearer explanations and better characterisation than dull, descriptive passages.

If you feel brave enough to tackle *Wolves* then your challenge will not only be to decipher to it, but enjoy doing so.

Claire Nicholls

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

A Brief History Of Time
Stephen Hawking
If you can handle *Wolves* then this scientific big bang theory will be a doddle!

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Photo credit Martin Walter

Details Author: Lynne Truss Publisher: Hammer Price: £9.99

CAT OUT OF HELL

Interview with the feline

Hammer's series of gothic novellas continues with this entertaining spin on classic horror storytelling tropes. Author Lynne Truss clearly knows her stuff, and has great fun referencing everything from MR James to Anne Rice as William, our recently widowed narrator, is sent an email about an impossible conversation between an actor named Wiggy and a cat called Roger.

As Roger tells the story of how he learned to speak, William begins to realise that the tale is more sinister than he originally realised. Kidnapping, murder and Satanic cults soon occupy the mind of our grieving librarian as he becomes a part of the story.

There's a dedication at the start of the book that reads "To Gemma, who loves proper horror, with apologies." This obviously doesn't mean that horror lovers won't enjoy *Cat Out Of Hell*, as Truss' affection for and knowledge of the genre feels utterly

"TRUSS' AFFECTION FOR THE GENRE FEELS UTTERLY GENUINE"

genuine. It is, however, a novel that plays with conventions, and instead of having a character like Louis de Pointe du Lac at its centre, it has a Machievellian cat who sounds like Vincent Price.

Truss keeps things moving at a good pace, and the first half is very funny indeed, as the documents William uncovers include Wiggy's unfinished screenplay version of his strange conversations. Around the halfway point, the author introduces some real danger to the plot, which is as entertaining if not quite as convincing. As things build towards a tense finale, the delicate balance between pastiche and parody threatens to tip, but it's tremendous fun all the way through. It's a little uneven, and we'd recommend reading it quickly for maximum effect, but this an enjoyable comic spin on old classics for genre rookies and horror fans alike.

Jonathan Hatfull

VERDICT ★★☆☆☆

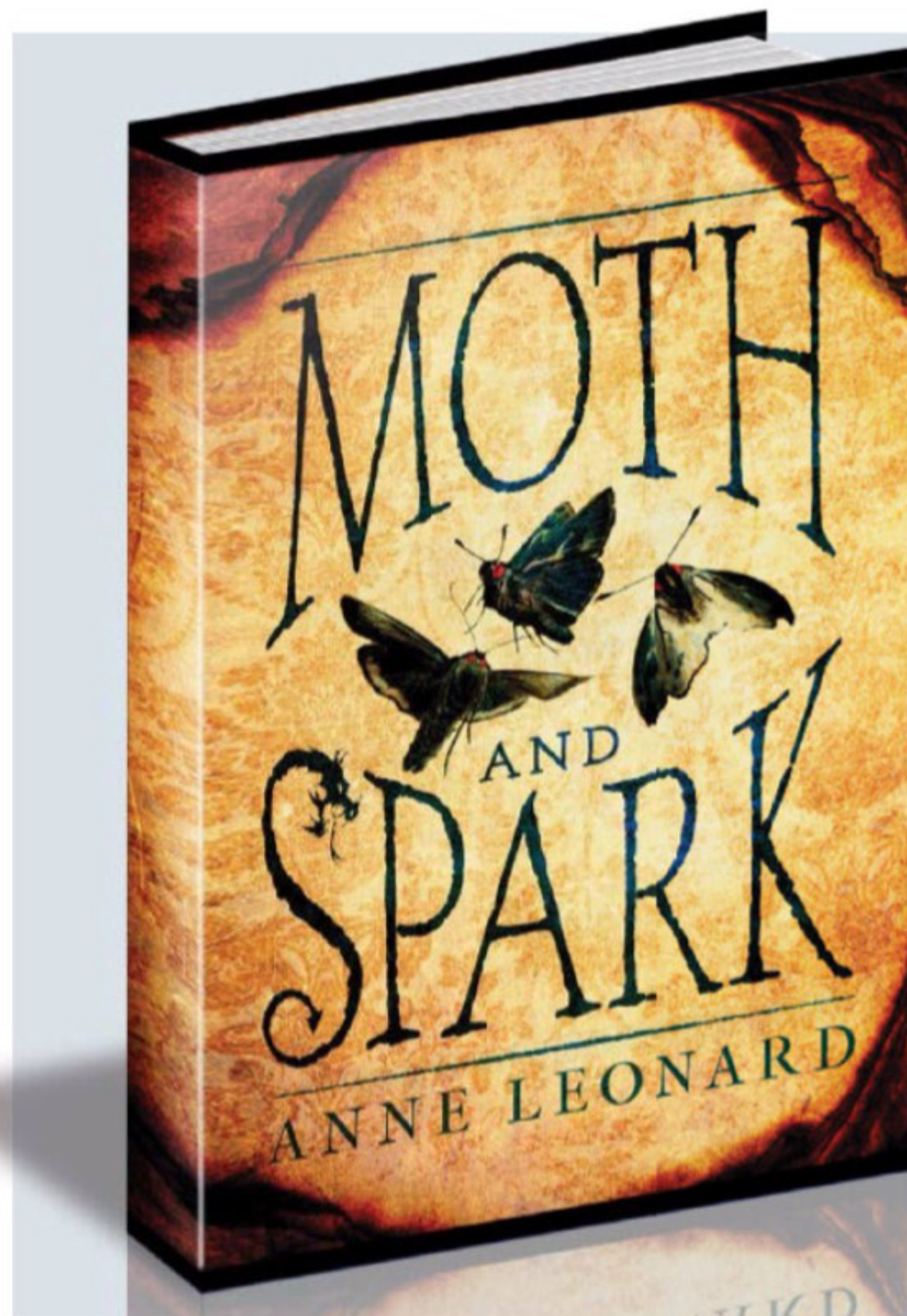
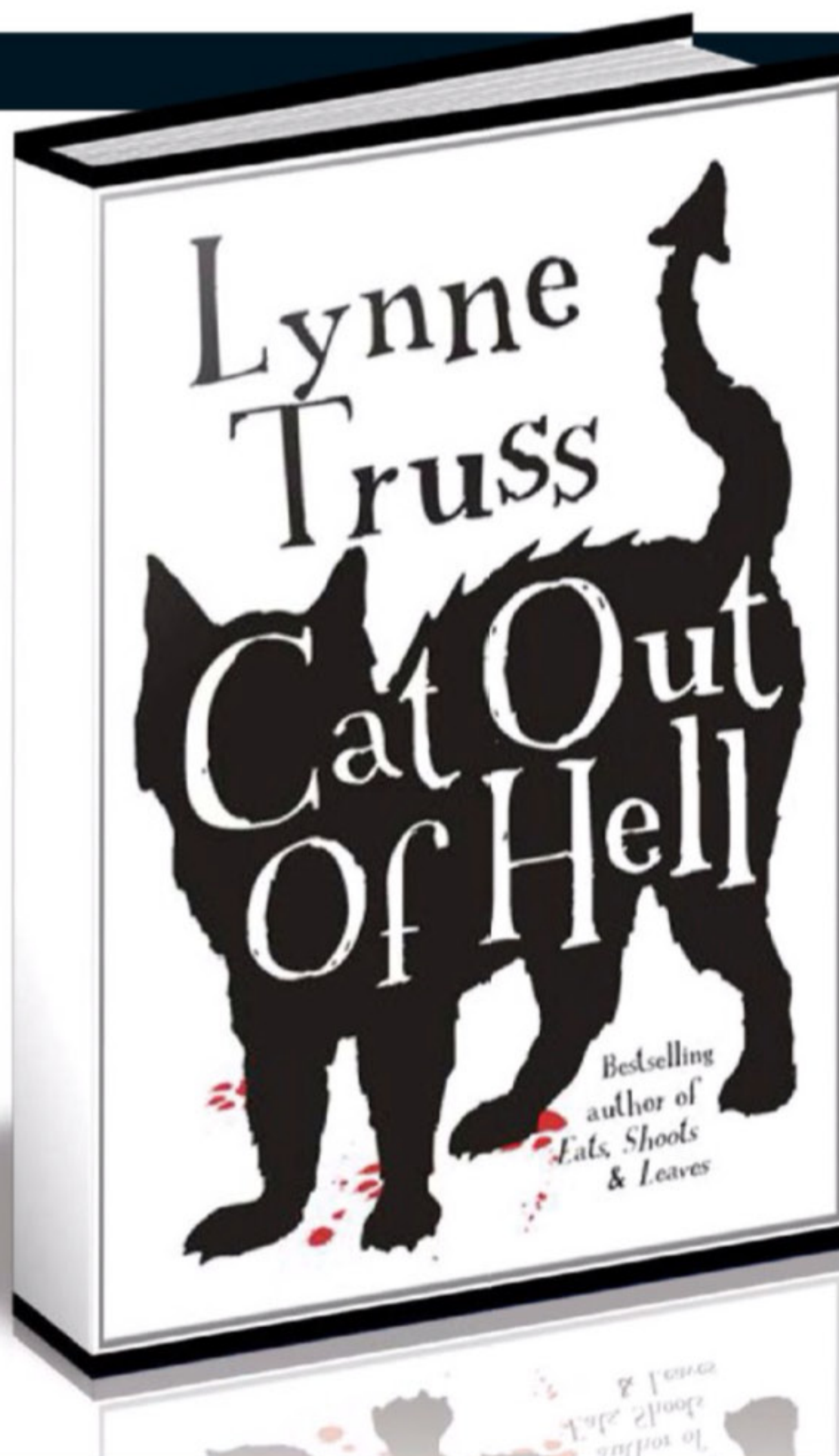


IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

John Dies At The End

David Wong

Talking dogs and flying cats are among the least weird incidents in this cult novel.



Details Author: Anne Leonard Publisher: Headline Publishing Group Price: £7.99

MOTH AND SPARK

Needs igniting

Sex, dragons and magic should never equate to a narrative disaster, but somehow author Anne Leonard has managed to take these *Game Of Thrones*-like conventions and weave them into an average storyline, with average characters and a decidedly average level of action.

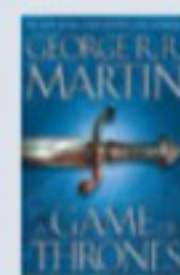
When previously promiscuous Prince Corin meets doctor's daughter Tam in the library, it's love at first sight, and the narrative's predictability doesn't lessen at all from then on. Few will be opposed to a little romance among impending war and bloody battles, but the first half is so heavily focused on their relationship that threats of war and bedroom talk about possibly having to leave to fight at some point are difficult to take seriously. Additionally, neither protagonist is outstandingly likeable, with womaniser Corin somehow finding love overnight in Tam, who although a little more ballsy and intelligent than other woman of her time, is mostly admired for her looks. Not quite the autonomous female lead we've grown accustomed to.

A lot of time was clearly dedicated to the plot's inception, but it's difficult to take interest in the couple's newly acquired powers or focus on understanding the Kingdom's structure when the spotlight is constantly primarily on these two.

The threat of war remains just that throughout much of the book, and whether you'll actually care when it hits is a whole other question thanks to a lack of attachment to the leads and overall plot. Things pick up slightly after a gruesome death in the library, but this is momentary, and it rarely gathers pace again until dragons add an – admittedly brief – spark towards the conclusion. The issue, however, lies in the likelihood of you persevering that far.

Rowena Heal

VERDICT ★★☆☆☆



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

A Game Of Thrones

George RR Martin

You're more likely to be gripped by the plot of this, complete with battles, dragons and better characters.



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DOCTOR WHO



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Harraway is one of a range of authors to take on the challenge of writing about the Doctor.

Life Begins At 50

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

WE TALK TO ANGELMAKER AUTHOR NICK HARKAWAY ABOUT WRITING THE TENTH DOCTOR FOR THE BBC'S NEW TIME TRIPS SERIES...

© Rory Lindsay

The 50th birthday celebrations may be over, but the Doctor's adventures continue in a new series of eBooks: Time Trips. Some of the UK's most talented authors, including Joanne Harris, AL Kennedy, Cecelia Ahern, Jake Arnott and Nick Harkaway, have created new stories for the Time Lord. We spoke to Harkaway, author of *Angelmaker* and *The Gone-Away World*, about his book *Keeping Up With The Joneses*, which finds the Tenth Doctor and the TARDIS in a Welsh bed and breakfast... or is the bed and breakfast inside the TARDIS? And is there something else trapped in there with them?

Did the BBC explain how they chose you to be a part of this series?

There are two ways to think about that. The first is that there's a giant machine made of bicycle pumps, hamsters and red wine in the basement of an old power station, and they go down there and turn the handle and my name comes out, because I'm that sort of person. The second is that they looked at the demographics and sales figures, and said, "this guy could work." Both of these things are true, but the first one is more important and interesting than the second.

What does *Doctor Who* mean to you?

The show means my early adventures in speculative worlds, a growing sense of identity. It also means hiding behind the sofa and wishing I was braver, which I wasn't. The Doctor as a character means possibility, the breaking of absurd restrictions and the idea that someone cares. And fun; always fun.

What was the process of deciding which author would write which Doctor?

Albert [DePetrillo, BBC Books director] said: "The giant machine made of bicycle pumps gave me your name, which one do you want? X, Y, and Z are taken."

I said: "I want Ten, because Ten is the one who is manic yet serious, who cares, who is obsessed with words, who witters on even in a crisis and who makes me laugh."

What was the most exciting part of writing the Tenth Doctor?

Writing the Tenth Doctor! It's really not subdivisible. You sit there and write, the Doctor is in your head, you get to talk to him and he answers, and that actually happens because you're being allowed to play in the actual sandpit.

Not that I am in any way irrational or over-excited about it; I'm a pro. Pros emphatically do not dance around in our pajamas when the phone rings. There are no photos. It did not happen.

Did you feel any added pressure writing the Tenth Doctor, given that he's so beloved?

No. I wasn't conscious of pressure at the time beyond the need to tell an authentic Tenth Doctor story. That's a discipline, demand, pressure and a guide all at the same time. It's a huge compulsion in its own right, I didn't need more.

Now that you mention it, however, I've abruptly remembered that other people will read this, they

will have opinions and some of them will hate me a lot, because that is what happens. I'm nervous as hell.

Where would you place *Keeping Up With The Joneses* on the *Who* light-dark scale?

In the slightly lightish middle, probably. It's not like a goofy happy episode, and there's jeopardy, but it's not one of those where you're going to lose sleep, either. On the other hand, it reflects a few writerly and fannish opinions and desires that I have. I'd say it maybe goes to a thoughtful place occasionally, but mostly it's about the adventure.

What was your decision process when it came to choosing a companion for the Doctor?

Companions are a place where I have strong feelings. I like it when they can change and grow, when they can match him. I'm very uncomfortable with the Doctor as someone who keeps the people he loves and the human race more generally in a state of artificial childhood, so I chose a companion who could give him a run for his money. I think that's important in the depiction of genius, actually: it needs to be challenged or it looks drab. It's like heroes and villains: Bond without Goldfinger is just a tough guy in a suit.

What are the challenges of creating a *Doctor Who* adventure in prose form?

Almost the hardest thing is that he doesn't have a name. Other than that it's about conveying self. Going inside the Doctor's head is problematic, because then you've got to describe the cognition of a Time Lord. On screen they just show his expression, his hesitation, his

inspiration, and the actors makes you believe. In prose you have to find a way to encompass that, and yet if you go inside his head too directly you're going to get it wrong, because it's the Doctor.

What do you think it is about *Doctor Who* that keeps it so alive?

The Doctor's a classic. It comes down to the setup being iconic, but also flexible, and just very appealing. The Doctor is the wanderer who comes in and fixes stuff, then moves on. The thing that makes the Doctor distinct is maybe his playfulness. In the face of a serious universe full of horrors, this rogue Time Lord knows when to laugh, and still wins. That's priceless. The Doctor can change, and be anything. We'll have female Doctors, non-white Doctors, whatever, and the character will be completely recognisable and unharmed. People will yell for a week or so, and then settle down into how cool it is.

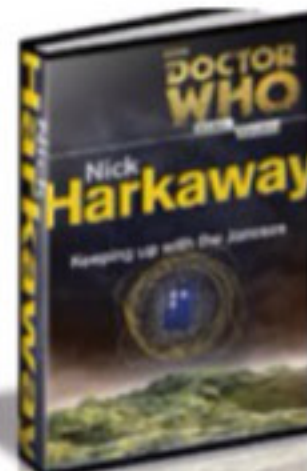
"TOM BAKER WAS MY DOCTOR, AND I'D LOVE TO WRITE A PETER CAPALDI OR JOHN HURT STORY"

Is there another *Doctor* that you would love to write for?

The TV one! I want the transition episode to the first female Doctor. But to answer the question, I almost asked for Tom

Baker because he was my Doctor when I first became conscious of the show, and I'd love to write a Peter Capaldi or John Hurt story. Maybe I will, who knows?

There's time, and there's still hamsters in that machine in the basement.



Nick Harkaway's *Keeping Up With The Joneses*, part of the *Doctor Who* Time Trips series of digital shorts, is out now, published by BBC Books and priced at £1.99



COMING IN THE FUTURE:

THE BOG WARRIOR

by Cecelia Ahern,
Available 10 July

THE LONELINESS OF THE LONG-DISTANCE TIME TRAVELLER

by Joanne Harris,
Available 13 November

Keeping Up With The Joneses will centre around David Tennant's Tenth Doctor.

Forward in time

THE TIME TRIP SERIES AT A GLANCE



THE DEATH PIT AL Kennedy

Believing that he has landed in Chicago, the Fourth Doctor arrives at a golf spa hotel in 1978, only to discover that the guests have started disappearing. If the Doctor doesn't do something clever very soon, things will get out of hand...

Available now



INTO THE NOWHERE Jenny Colgan

The Eleventh Doctor and Clara land on a planet that – unusually – neither the Doctor nor the TARDIS have ever seen or heard of before. It's almost as if it has somehow been erased from existence...

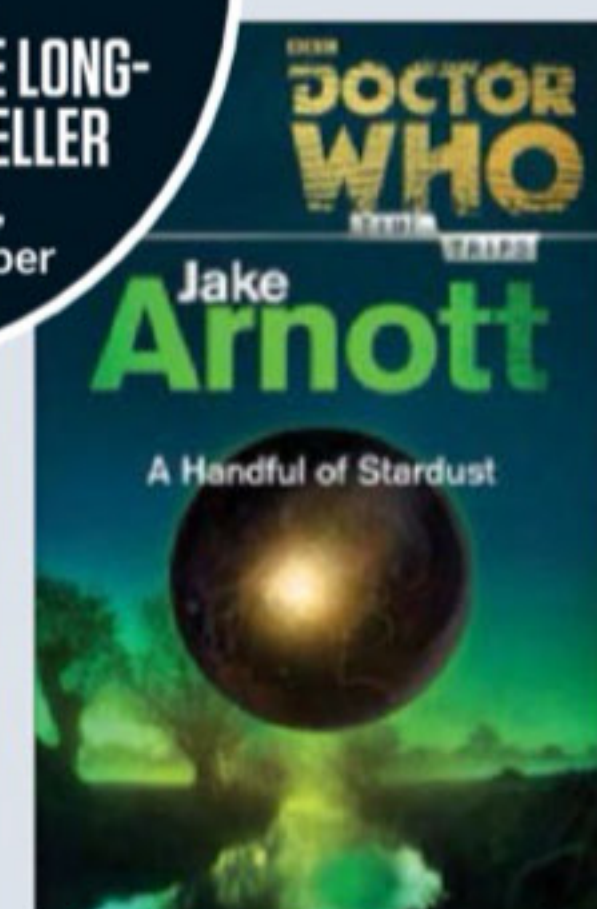
Available now



SALT OF THE EARTH Trudi Canavan

Having recently arrived there for a long-overdue holiday, the Third Doctor and Jo Grant are greatly intrigued by the salt statues adorning an Australian salt lake in 2028. They almost look like they're in pain...

Available 6 March



A HANDFUL OF STARDUST Jake Arnott

The Sixth Doctor and Peri have the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Doctor John Dee, who has discovered what he describes as a "great disturbance in the cosmos." What could scare Doctor Dee himself?

Available 3 April

Writers: Brian Michael Bendis, Jason Aaron, Brian Wood **Artists:** Various **Publisher:** Marvel/Panini **Price:** £15.99

X-MEN: BATTLE OF THE ATOM

Saving tomorrow

Mutants, will they ever learn? It's almost as if the last 50 years of conflict and colossal bad times have taught them nothing. Still, if *Battle Of The Atom* proved anything, it's that a harmless little schism really is the least of the X-Men's surmounting problems.

X-Men tangle with the space-time continuum, and hijinks ensue. For seasoned mutant sympathisers, it will be hard to see this as anything other than retread of old, tired ground. That being said, it's satisfying to revel in the ludicrous amount fan service being dished out. In celebrating the X-Men's 50th anniversary, *Battle Of The Atom* succeeds in paying tribute to three generations of teams, while still propelling all involved towards a fairly predictable 'new' status quo.

Credit where it's due: Brian Michael Bendis, Jason Aaron and Brian Wood do a remarkable job of keeping everything accessible. Long-time readers will enjoy the snappy interplay between characters, and hats off again to Aaron for his continued attempts to make us give a damn about Iceman. He's certainly succeeding, though it might have something to do with the frosty wizard beard that future-Drake sports.

The art, however, stumbles in places. That said, trying to keep a level of consistency between the likes of Frank Cho, Stuart Immonen, David Lopez,



Chris Bachalo and Giuseppe Camuncoli was always going to be tough. At the very least it's a showcase of the talent Marvel has on tap, but also yet another sign that the publisher should rein in the scope of its summer event books.

Battle Of The Atom set out with two goals: alter the status quo and celebrate 50 years of mutant oppression, and has succeeded in achieving both.

Josh West

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

All-New X-Men: Volume One

Brian Michael Bendis/
Stuart Immonen

Bendis reinstates what we always loved about *X-Men*: the drama.



Writer: Dan Slott **Artist:** Various **Publisher:** Marvel/Panini **Price:** £9.99

SUPERIOR SPIDER-MAN: NECESSARY EVIL

Saving tomorrow

Otto Octavius is finally losing his grasp on Peter Parker's life; his temper seems insatiable, and his heroic endeavours are only getting more violent and self-serving. He looks one breakdown away from slapping on some thick framed glasses, grabbing a bowel cut and going old-school supervillain on somebody's ass.

Whether you're a fan of Slott's direction or not, the return of *Spider-Man 2099*'s very own Miguel O'Hara makes this a must-read for fans of the alternate universe Spidey. Coupled with a cameo from Black Cat, it highlights how far *Superior Spider-Man* has stumbled from Parker's ideals, and as entertaining as this almost-elseworlds tale has become, the question remains: what do you want from your *Spider-Man* stories? Is it to have the status quo rocked, or to see your friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man trying to balance heroics and his chequebook? If it's the latter, we've got good news: it seems events may finally be coming to a head.

We'd be remiss to highlight the phenomenal art of Ryan Stegman, and the brief glimpse of the 2099 universe left us wanting more. With O'Hara seemingly sticking around, it might be a while



before we get a chance to see Stegman return to that world. It's a shame, but we are happy to wait.

Superior Spider-Man is starting to wear a little thin. It's without doubt the most extreme title in Marvel roster, but while Otto began with the best of intentions, his acts as Spider-Man have become an assault on everything we hold dear about the character.

Josh West

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Spider-Island

Dan Slott/Various

Slott knows how to write Spider-Man: silly fun with beautiful art. What more could you ask for?

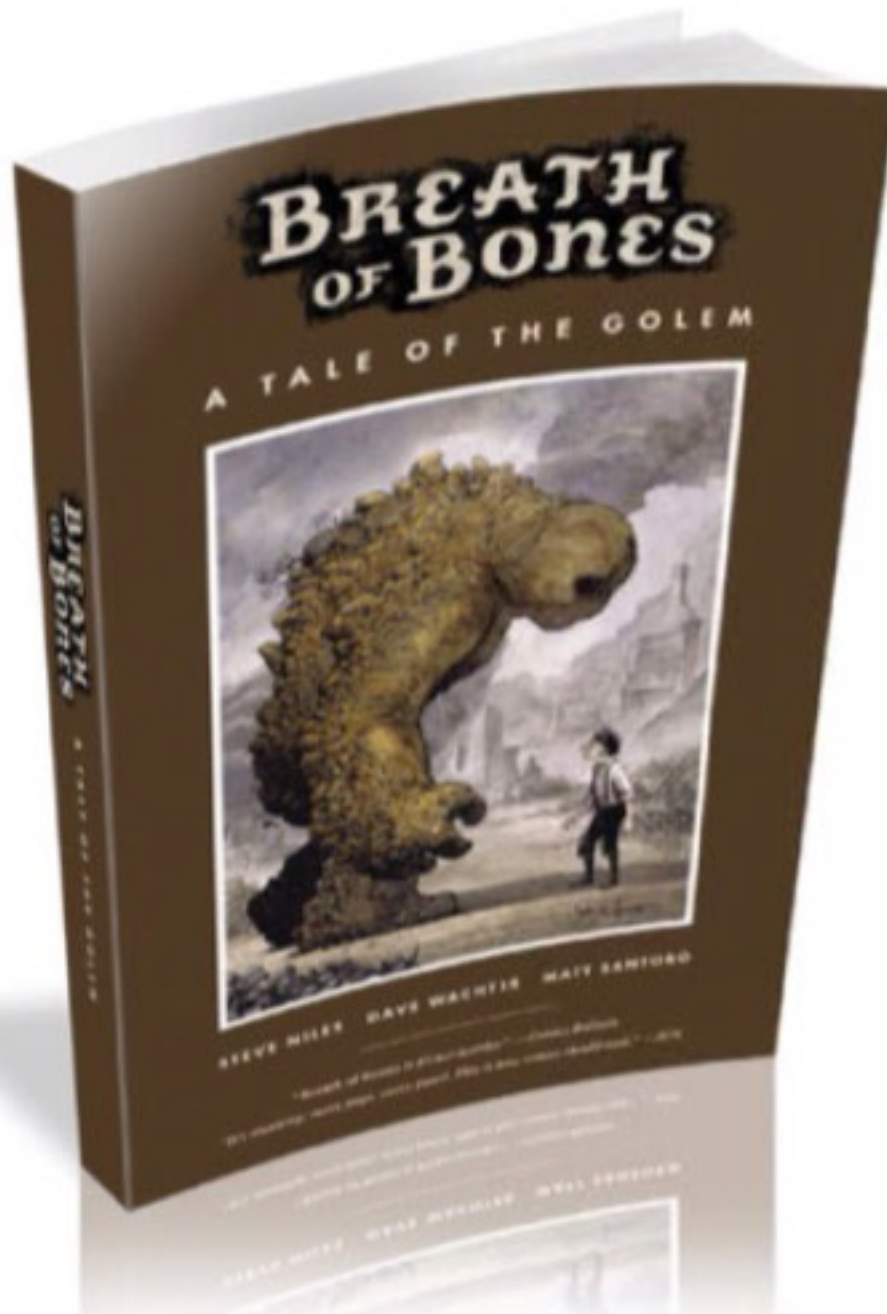




Details Authors: Steve Niles, Matt Santoro **Artist:** Dave Watcher **Publisher:** Dark Horse **Price:** £9.99

BREATH OF BONES: A TALE OF THE GOLEM

The evil that men do



When you live and die by an industry that hinges itself on weekly injections of spectacle, it's easy to lose perspective. The nuance of creativity, the power in pacing – we are all too quick to forget the truly sublime when character X is going through their most arduous adventure yet (again). But then something like *Breath Of Bones* drops into your lap; a rare release that will make you fall in love with the medium all over again, and

appreciate that great storytelling is the careful marriage between scripting and illustration; not one or the other.

Stories of World War II defiance against the dehumanising evil that spread across Europe often seem too few in number. But if you look in the right places there's evidence of our ability as a race to stand up to great acts of evil with a united bravery and optimism that seems absent from our daily lives. It's this notion that *Breath Of Bones* carefully covers, becoming an astute examination of the nature of good and evil.

Here, the shadow of war is cast over a small European village, as all able-bodied men are ripped from their homes and sent to the front lines, leaving women, children and the elders defenceless, with the story centering on one young boy's accelerated descent into adulthood and the responsibilities that come with it. The first chapter lingers on the serenity of the village; Steve Niles, Matt Santoro and Dave Watcher are intent on quietly documenting the soul draining from its residents as reports of the war come in across radio broadcasts. And when that penny drops after

a British pilot crash-lands on the village's doorstep, drawing the attention of the approaching forces, it's heartbreaking.

That's *Breath Of Bones'* greatest accomplishment: its nuance. The writing duo are happy to let Watcher do the heavy lifting. His soft black and white pencils never fail to capture and document the emotion of a scene – every panel has something to say. It's impressive, more so when the graphic novels' namesake is introduced: the Golem, an important figure from Jewish folklore. You'd be forgiven if you thought the introduction of a behemoth – created by children from clay – to head off the Axis forces would ruin what is otherwise an outstanding period piece. You'd be forgiven, but also entirely wrong. The Golem serves as a powerful reminder that faith will always trump the wicked of this world, even in the face of great adversity. To a point, it's drowning in symbolism, but you'll never feel weighted by it. *Breath Of Bones* might just be the best scripting from the *Criminal Macabre* writer yet.

This is an accomplishment for all involved. Watcher steals the show across every page and every panel, his artwork doing an incredible job of highlighting the contrast between good and evil, between the almost-otherworldly situations these people have found themselves in. But who's to say the Golem even exists? Perhaps the greatest lesson is that with hope we can accomplish anything – that's the lasting impression Niles and Santoro's story will leave. This is a creative team with something to say, and the message is beautiful, haunting, profound and disturbing. Isn't it great when a book reminds you that this industry doesn't just revolve around superheroes?

Josh West

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Criminal Macabre
Steve Niles/Ben Templesmith
If you're looking for more Niles, his collaboration with artist Ben Templesmith is unmissable.

60 SECONDS WITH

Si Spurrier



Numbercruncher went from *Judge Dredd* Magazine strip to the Titan Comics series to the graphic novel. As a creator-owned series, is it satisfying

to see it evolve?

One of the strange things about the story's inception was that the idea just struck me pre-formed, rather than building up little by little in a more organic way, as is more common. Given what a weird mix of ingredients went into it, I didn't really know what to do with it – besides intuiting that PJ [Holden, artist] would be the right man for the job.

We were hence indebted to the *Megazine* for letting us develop and publish it in its first form. That first reaction – to a grimly funny little story about love, loss and reincarnation – was so overwhelmingly positive that we knew we had to do everything in our power to get it out to other audiences.

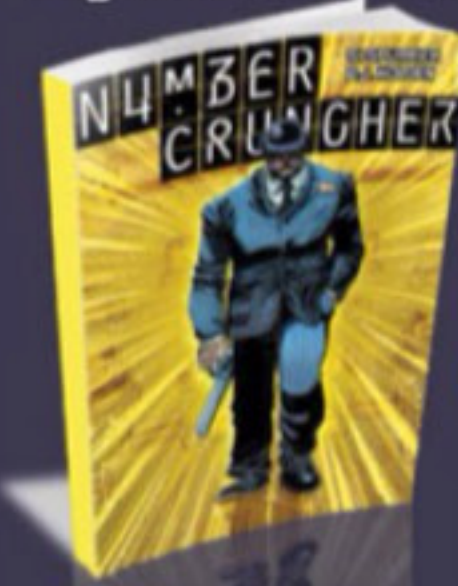
"PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING CAME OUT OF PJ'S BRAIN"

Numbercruncher has some wonderful big ideas whizzing around in it. What sort of detail did you go into with PJ?

Pretty much everything you see on the page came out of PJ's brain. As I mentioned, *Numbercruncher* arrived in my mind in a very odd way – as a fully formed structural assemblage, rather than the usual disjointed sequence of details, plot-gristle and themes – so we had the opportunity to enjoy a 'pure' collaboration, with PJ tackling the design of the characters and often bizarre environments without too much of my own tyrannical input.

What sort of reading were you doing around the time you dreamt up *Numbercruncher*?

I think the closest I can muster by way of inspiration was the novel *Shantaram*, which proposes a sort of reverse-entropy in which all things are constantly evolving towards a state of Perfect Complexity rather than Perfect Simplicity. I already had the bare bones of my structure, and I felt like there must be some sort of elegant mathematical solution for why



the Metaphysical Accountancy, the Divine Calculator and all the rest of it are doing what they're doing.

Numbercruncher is out now priced £14.99



“THAT’S ALL
SUBCONSCIOUS, AND
BY GETTING INTO
THESE CHARACTERS,
I’M SLOWLY DRIVING
MYSELF MAD

FRAZER IRVING”



© Frazer Irving

ART OF DARKNESS

In the world of comics, fans are used to the famous writers being the ones that steal the headlines. But when artist Frazer Irving announces a new book, people sit up and take notice... WORDS LAURA SNEDDON

A remarkably unique artist, Frazer Irving has graced the pages of *Batman*, *Judge Dredd* and *X-Men* among numerous others, bringing an otherworldly beauty to those comics that is hard to overstate.

2014 will see Irving finish his own series, *Gutsville*, and launch a new title at Image, *Cerulean*, after the release of the highly anticipated *Annihilator*, written by Grant Morrison. We caught up with the busy artist for a chat about *Annihilator*, working with Morrison and his recent stint on *Uncanny X-Men*.

"I have those moments when I'm working on stuff, and then I imagine what the reaction will be," laughs Irving, "and the crowds are all cheering. There are certain parts [of *Annihilator*] which will show up everything I've done before. I have every faith that Grant is going to, when we get to the end of the story, have transformed it into his usual brand of subconscious-rending madness, and I'm kind of scared that he's going to take us down a dark path and therefore leave my life in ruins."

All of which sounds slightly sinister! Morrison has said that *Annihilator* is perfect so far, and that he couldn't imagine anyone else doing it.

"Yes, it's weird," Irving trails off. "I remember reading an interview with [artist] Chris Weston when he was working on *The Filth*, and he said his life started to mimic what was going on with the character, and that stuck with me. I've only read the first two scripts, I know roughly what the plot is meant to be, but I'm also fully aware that my contribution to the artwork in some of the earlier stages will influence where Grant goes with the story. I know how fluidly that works, and the past year some of the things that happen to that character were kind of happening to me, and it was really freaky. It was kind of, 'I know what happens to some of these people. I don't want that to happen. I want to live, man! I want to live!'"

"I find myself really getting into the skin of some of these characters in a slightly disturbing way, but the good thing about it is, with Grant's scripts, he does give an awful lot of ideas, but there's always the caveat at the bottom of, 'you do what you think is right.' But the strange thing is, that level of responsibility and that level of freedom, it kind of stopped me in my tracks at certain points. I would be staring at a blank page for an entire day. I did sci-fi buildings, and then I was like 'No, no, no. There has to be something more to this.' I'm currently designing a futuristic city, and this thing worries me, because that particular aspect of the story, I know what Grant's into, I know what he's read, I know what comics he likes, to a degree where I have to provide something that's not that. If he says, 'I want it to be like [Jack] Kirby', and I'm like, 'I know you want it to look like Kirby, but you mustn't have Kirby because it won't take you anywhere. I want to give you something that gives you an idea, or pushes you in a thematic way or emotional direction.'

"And designing this city, it's fun, but I'm also scared about what might happen to this beautiful city. What's he going to do to it? But it is weird, because after I did *Uncanny X-Men*, which was kind of a childhood dream, but they weren't *my* X-Men, they were someone else's, and they all had different costumes, so it wasn't quite the fanboy dream. With *Annihilator*, I pretty much get to invent that childhood superhero dream in a couple of pages, and that's very appealing. This is like my *Guernica*."

Morrison has previously described *Annihilator* as psycho sci-fi, so it's intriguing that it already seems to be messing with the artist's head.

"I know that reading Grant's scripts, if you read them just as a script, you will end up scratching your head and going, 'There's something missing,'" Irving muses. "And of course, there is something missing, it's the comic-book! It doesn't exist until it's been drawn, and I'm having to fill that, and I'm thinking my own psychoses are going into the page – I'm more

of a contributor to this than I have been to a lot of stuff before, but in a different way. It's not like I'm changing the storytelling necessarily, but the characters are acting, so if Grant has suggested that there's a guy looking quizzically into the shadows of a corridor, smoking a cigarette, I'll try and draw that. But how they're squinting, how they're holding the cigarette, and the way their nose is snarling, that's me, and that's all subconscious, and by getting into these characters I'm slowly driving myself mad. But I did actually send a little note at one point saying, 'Can we make sure this has a happy ending?'"

Last year saw Irving embark on a solid run of *Uncanny X-Men* with Brian Bendis, which was quite a departure for the book from a style standpoint.

"It was one of those things I just couldn't turn down," he grins. "There was a point where I wasn't entirely sure I was particularly suited to do that particular book until we did the whole limbo thing, then I thought 'Right, OK. You've got the right guy for this!' Because I enjoyed it, I think it had the right effect on the readers, and it had some very interesting, dramatic stuff going on there. I was looking forward to doing *Dazzler*, because I did one panel with her, and I was like, 'I'm the guy with the light. I can do *Dazzler*. Dude, I can re-invent the way that character is portrayed in two dimensions, and even give them ideas about how do it for movies!' But then it didn't happen."

"The penultimate issue I did where they have that huge mutant rally, and drawing that rally scene was great for me. I really enjoyed it because I could be really subversive, and I could represent humanity as I saw it. It wouldn't be generic, safe characters who are all beautiful and weighted in one particular ethnic direction. I could muck around with stuff, and that was a high point for me, even higher than the limbo thing. Doing that mutant rally, I actually felt like I was engaging with the story."

"But I also knew I had to do *Annihilator*, and doing *X-Men*, struggling with *Annihilator*, and changing the gears between the two is like going from wearing ballet shoes to hiking boots, it's like your feet are going to start getting confused: swelling and contracting, swelling and contracting. *Annihilator* had to get done; I had to commit to that and having superheroes in one head, and some dude having Satanic orgies in the other. They might start infecting each other."



Annihilator is coming soon from Legendary Comics. Frazer Irving's *Uncanny X-Men* run is available digitally on Comixology and Marvel Unlimited.



Frazer Irving has garnered acclaim for his work on *Uncanny X-Men*.

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Thunderbirds Spaced NeverEnding Story Werewolves

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ITS CLAWS **122**

COMPLETE GUIDE

GERRY ANDERSON

A LIFETIME OF
INSPIRATION,
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MONTHLY





THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO GERRY ANDERSON

50 YEARS AGO, PRODUCTION BEGAN ON TWO SHOWS THAT WOULD CATAPULT GERRY ANDERSON INTO THE PANTHEON OF CHILDHOOD HEROES: STINGRAY AND THUNDERBIRDS. WE JOURNEY BACK TO THE DAWN OF SMALL-SCREEN SCI-FI TO CELEBRATE A LIFETIME SPENT BRINGING THE FUTURE INTO OUR PAST...

WORDS CHRIS CHANTLER

"Striking effects and fresh techniques making possible new strides forward in the art of puppetry."

-TV Times, February 1960

In February 1960, the birth of Supermarionation was awarded a *TV Times* front cover. There stood the 20-inch Sheriff Tex Tucker of *Four Feather Falls*, the innocuous puppet Western that launched Gerry Anderson's revolutionary super-marionette-animation technique upon the world. It wasn't yet named as such, but the commercial TV listings magazine introduced the ingenious process to an intrigued nation for the first time, and theirs still serves as the best layman's explanation: "An electronic device – never before used in puppetry – ensures that the puppets' lips are synchronised with the voices... The tape is played back and linked, via steel strings, to magnets inside the puppets' heads."

Also noted was the rather optimistic – though probably accurate in 1960 – assertion that "the puppets' wires are so thin as to be invisible on the TV screen." A funny, magical and wholesome cowboys-and-Indians spoof, *Four Feather Falls* was a quietly auspicious cornerstone in British television, representing not only the cutting edge of a new style of puppetry, but also the first project to be created and helmed by

Anderson. It was ironic, then, that it was a step away from sci-fi themes.

In 1958, AP Films – the company Anderson owned with Arthur Provis (also employing Sylvia Thamm, later to become Mrs Anderson) – had made 26 episodes of *Torchy The Battery Boy*, the adorably peculiar adventures of a battery-powered 'toy-boy' with a lamp in his head and a rocket that flew him to the planet of lost toys in search of Mr Bumbledrop's poodle. *Torchy* is still a beguiling, surreal gem of Fifties kids' TV, tinged with airs of menace and melancholy, even alongside

"GERRY ANDERSON ELOQUENTLY CAPTURED THE TIME OF OPTIMISM AND EXPECTATION OF A BRAVE NEW WORLD JUST AROUND THE CORNER"

MARK WOOLLARD

a wide range of funny voices from master comic actor Kenneth Connor.

Remarkably, Anderson and Provis finished Series Two months ahead of schedule, after which they resolved to do something of their own (although Provis left AP Films amicably when *Four Feather Falls* was at the pilot stage). *Torchy* had been created by writer Roberta Leigh, who had first approached AP Films in 1957 to make 52 episodes of *The Adventures Of Twizzle*, about a wooden boy with extendable arms and legs on the

run from a horrid girl with his floppy-pawed pussycat chum Footso. Only the first episode remains in the archive, a quirky little curio representing Anderson's earliest existent recording.

As he pointed out throughout his career, Anderson never wanted to work with puppets. When Leigh presented his struggling firm with *Twizzle*, the unenthusiastic filmmakers were compelled to do it to stay solvent; he later said that when he heard puppets were involved he "nearly vomited on the floor." Even at this earliest juncture he was working hard to improve

standards of TV puppetry, raising puppeteers higher above the floor for greater scale and movement, introducing lighter cameras, cuts and close-ups while bringing in every episode on its budget of £450. After turning Leigh's *Twizzle* and *Torchy* tales into TV successes, Anderson finally assumed the mantle of his

own creation right at the beginning of the Sixties – a decade he would go on to dominate.

"I don't think you can be born in the Sixties and be a boy and not be a fan of Gerry's work," attests Mark Woollard, who worked with Gerry on *Terrahawks* and *Dick Spanner, PI* in the mid-Eighties and *New Captain Scarlet* in 2005. "Looking back, you can see how he so eloquently captured the time of optimism and expectation of a brave new world just around the corner." The early Sixties indeed seems like a time of ➤

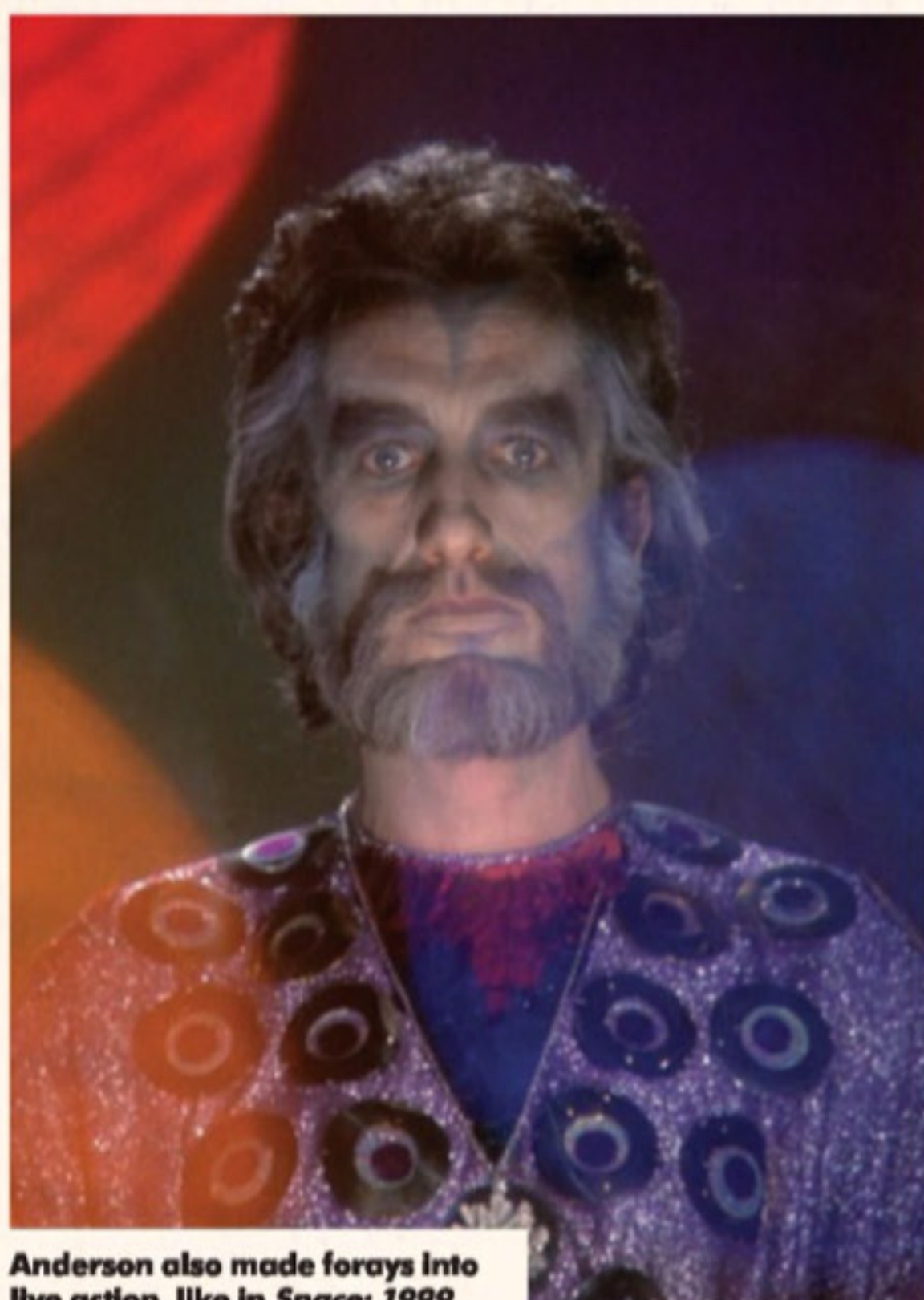


The puppet master's legacy is most clear in *Thunderbirds*, his most popular creation.

After *Thunderbirds*, *Stingray* is perhaps Anderson's biggest hit.



"CAPTAIN SCARLET'S BITTER, ATTRITIONAL 'WAR OF NERVES' GUARANTEED THE SHOW A REPUTATION AS GERRY'S DARKEST, MOST VIOLENT SERIES"



Anderson also made forays into live action, like in *Space: 1999*.

➤ wonder and exploration, of space walks and Harold Wilson's "white heat of technology". In 1961, Anderson expected to stay in the Wild West for a while longer, but Granada declined to recommission *Four Feather Falls*, so he developed a more up-to-date idea and took it to legendary entertainment mogul Lew Grade, deputy manager of commercial channel ATV and manager of production company ITC. A show about a car that can go in the sea, space or anywhere else that anyone might need help: *Supercar*. Lew loved the idea, and a fruitful partnership was born.

In and around *Supercar* were archetypal square-jawed hero Mike Mercury, two bumbling scientists, a little kid and his pet monkey, Mitch (Morecambe and Wise were evidently fans; a 1962 episode of their ATV series *Two Of A Kind* opened with a brief, inconsequential *Supercar* send-up, seemingly just so Eric could dress up as Mitch). Supermarionation was finally named and emblazoned on screen, and the titular vehicle was Gerry's first classic motorised device (*Torchy's* rocket notwithstanding). *Supercar's* title sequence was being filmed as Gerry and Sylvia Anderson drove home from their wedding; Gerry popped into the studio to see how it was going, and

ended up staying until 4am. Although it languishes in the shadow of Gerry's bigger Sixties creations, *Supercar* remains a neat, sweet series with a lovely sense of humour, but after 39 half-hours the restless imaginations of Gerry and Lew were ready to launch a new series named after another fabulous vehicle.

Fireball XL5 comprised the adventures of Steve Zodiac and the World Space Patrol, including sexy medic Dr Venus (voiced by Sylvia), bumbling scientist Professor Matt Matic, Gerry-voiced robot Robert, moronic pet alien Zoonie and misogynistic Scottish engineer Jock ("You don't think I'd arrive on a new planet without a haggis, do you?"). A tremendously jolly show capable of emotional character studies like 'Flight To Danger', *Fireball XL5* was a big hit, cracking the Top 40 with its fondly remembered closing tune and even networking in the USA (indeed, it's not wholly fanciful to detect its influence on *Star Trek*). The world-governmental security organisation with ranks, fleets, uniforms and symbols was a prototypical Anderson setting, augmented by a glittering roster of quirky foes like flappy vegetable Chlorophon in 'Plant Man From Space' (who intoned "Colonel Zodiac, I've been expecting you" long before it became associated with Bond and Blofeld) and the snazzily dressed, theatrically



THE MAGNIFICENT ANDERSON

What Gerry meant to the people he worked with

"I remember he would sit at the boardroom table while the rest of the crew were arguing their own departmental gripes and say nothing while views were exchanged. Then, like Darth Vader, he would interrupt and everyone would fall silent. He would say something brief that would just put everyone back on the same page. He could be inspirational like that."

"He was also extremely kind, charming, generous and very encouraging. He had a bone-dry wit and liked a laugh. So many people went on to achieve their ambitions because they were inspired by Gerry's shows and Gerry himself, me included. There are not many people who can claim to have had a universe named after them. But Gerry has. The Gerry Anderson Universe will still be spinning long after I'm gone."

Mark Woollard, director on *Terrahawks*, *Dick Spanner*, *PI* and *New Captain Scarlet*

"He was great to work with and was open to ideas, and once the project got really rolling he left you alone to get on with it. You were given enormous freedom, which I had great fun with. I'd often blow things up and film them just to see what it looked like. When Gerry happened on one of them I said it was a test for an idea I had. He seemed happy with that, but knew what I was really up to, which he admitted years later!"

"I think these mini-epics had a profound effect on the childhood of a lot of people, with imagery and concepts we had never been seen before, and helped inspire to a degree the likes of Peter Jackson and James Cameron."

Steve Begg, visual effects designer on *Terrahawks*, *Dick Spanner*, *PI*, *Space Precinct* and *New Captain Scarlet*

voiced Zavians in 'The Day The Earth Froze' ("Before we dispose of Colonel Zodiac and his companions, I think they would be interested to see what we are doing here...").

As much fun as *Fireball XL5* was – and it was loads – it was ultimately trumped by the stunning *Stingray*. Gerry's first colour series brought to life a vivid and gorgeous undersea realm (filmed through a narrow tank of different-sized fish to avoid getting puppets wet), as well as a surprisingly frank love triangle between mute mermaid Marina, communications assistant Atlanta and ace hero Troy Tempest of the World Aquanaut Security Patrol (guess what shape his jaw was?), whose nemesis was the mighty Titan, overlord of the Aquaphibians. Beautifully realised, with the same sense of tongue-in-cheek fun as its predecessor, *Stingray*'s characters also benefited from a range of interchangeable heads, allowing them to register different feelings and reactions.

Then he did *Thunderbirds*. A towering institution of British popular culture, bringing together sons, dads and granddads thanks to periodic revivals that prove its deep appeal across six decades, there will always be a need to believe in the philanthropic heroes of International Rescue, whose purpose was perfectly

summed up by the normally stammering Brains: "We help people." There was a greater degree of procedural detail (each episode was twice the length as those of previous series), but a lengthy sequence of expository tension always paid off with some spectacular action. *Thunderbirds* was a success on every level, concertedly designed for greatness – why settle for one hero and one spacecraft when you can have five? Gerry had hit his creative stride, and AP Films were attaining unprecedented levels of professionalism and craftsmanship. Two motion pictures followed (we won't count the terrible 2004 one, obviously), along with a colossal merchandising empire and an abidingly indelible imprint on the minds of a nation.

Thunderbirds was always going to be a hard act to follow, but *Captain Scarlet And The Mysterons* – the inaugural project for Gerry's newly named Century 21 Pictures – was equally thrilling in a different way. It began with the accidental precipitation of war with Mars, populated by the invisible Mysterons, a 'peaceful species' (albeit with a sinister booming voice, much-impersonated in playgrounds and pubs ever since) whose curiosity is mistaken for aggression by the ill-fated Captain Black, one of the colour-coded captains of Earth's elite Spectrum force. The Mysterons

were an unorthodox, nebulous foe ("If only we were fighting something we understood," lamented Captain Brown, seconds before dying in a car crash), and the bitter, attritional 'war of nerves' guaranteed the show a reputation as Gerry's darkest and most violent series. The title sequence stalked its hero down a grimy back-alley for a lethal shoot-out, while closing credits featured illustrations of lurid death scenes, all of which the fearless Captain escaped thanks to his useful, if contrived, indestructibility. Due to the shrinking of electronics required for Supermarionation, the previously oversized puppet heads now mimicked human proportions, lending the show a greater verisimilitude than had yet been possible in Gerry's universe.

Scarlet is also unique among Gerry's creations, as it was the only one that he subsequently 'reimagined' for a new generation. After a protracted genesis, 2005's *New Captain Scarlet* extended the adventures of Spectrum's finest in sympathetic and skilful fashion, filmed in 'Hypermarionation' (aka CGI), much to Gerry's delight. Mark Woollard was overawed when Gerry asked him to direct *New Captain Scarlet*: "My jaw hit the floor," he confesses. "Naturally, I said yes. I ➤

TOP 5 GERRY ANDERSON CHARACTERS

The most iconic square-jawed heroes and idiosyncratic oddballs from the Anderson stable



5. CAPTAIN SCARLET

CAPTAIN SCARLET
"Captain Scarlet can defy hair-raising dangers without fear," boasted ITC's publicity booklet. "He can be killed, and yet live." The apotheosis of Gerry's alpha-male heroes, Scarlet (real name Paul Metcalfe, disappointingly) was voiced by Francis Matthews, doing his best Cary Grant impression. Another indestructible Captain from the future fronted his own series to less plausible effect in *Torchwood*.
Pick up the *Captain Scarlet: Complete Series* DVD box set for £10.75.



4. DR HORATIO BEAKER

SUPERCAR
The co-developer of *Supercar* and inventor of the madly groovy Beakette organ was a pompous but loveable proto-Yaffle-ish egghead with a sceptical, questioning mind: in the episode 'Amazonian Adventure', he looks up from a book and bumbles to himself: "The rubbish people do write. What can this man possibly know about neurotic anxieties in the New England squirrel?"
Pick up *Supercar: The Complete Series* on DVD for £22.69.



3. FATHER STANLEY UNWIN

THE SECRET SERVICE
Unwin's offbeat, avuncular persona had existed in the real world for years, but casting his puppet likeness as the unlikely hero of *The Secret Service* was a masterstroke. Unwin's portrayal of the gentle, twinkly clergyman was spot-on, reining in his natural eccentricity to deliver a measured performance.
Pick up *The Secret Service: Complete Series* DVD for £14.89.



2. ED STRAKER

UFO
SHADO's righteous but vulnerable commander, portrayed by the hypnotically watchable Ed Bishop, had an expansive and chequered back story; we see the birth of his son and demise of his marriage in 'Confetti Check A-OK', then we see his son die in devastating character study 'A Question Of Priorities'. Literally and figuratively the most human Gerry Anderson character of all.
Pick up *UFO: Volumes 1-4 Collector's Edition* DVD box set for £12.75.



1. LADY PENELOPE AND PARKER

THUNDERBIRDS
We daren't separate this double act. The super-cool aristocratic sexpot and her dependable butler represent the best of Sixties Britishness, with Penny's aloof sophistication counterpointed against Parker's diffident, roguish charm. Without their banter, unflappable resourcefulness and sizzling chemistry, *Thunderbirds* is basically about a bland family of do-gooders.
Pick up *Thunderbirds: The Complete Collection* on Blu-ray for £40.

Gerry on the set of perhaps his most mature sci-fi series *UFO*.



➤ was able to watch it come together and marvel at the results." Gerry screened the completed pilot at a lecture in London. "The audience gasped," Mark remembers. "They could see the possibilities. As we walked out the place was buzzing with anticipation." It took another five years to fund a full series, but eventually Mark was invited to Gerry's *New Captain Scarlet* office at Pinewood. "Gerry was like a pig in poo. It had been an awfully hard slog, but he'd got it up and running. It was very exciting and fraught with problems, but Gerry really pushed the technology. I think the shows were really exciting and visually eye-swivelling. It had the air of grown up sci-fi and raced along. It was a very cool piece of work, and to date my proudest achievement."

Infuriatingly, however, ITV schedulers ended up screening *New Captain Scarlet* in cut-up segments during Saturday morning show *Ministry Of Mayhem*. "I remember Gerry phoning me up on the morning it was transmitted, absolutely flabbergasted. Our show was much better than that. The title and credits were cut off and the show was split in two with no transmission times listed and buried. That was a real tragedy. I think it really knocked the stuffing out of him."

Back in 1968, Gerry followed the original, competently scheduled *Captain Scarlet* with *Joe 90*, which told of an ordinary (and thus rather annoying) nine-year-old boy who became the World Intelligence Network's 'Most Special Agent' by accessing brain patterns stored on computer tape via 'electrode glasses', allowing him to become an accomplished jet pilot, brain surgeon, astronaut, Arctic explorer, racing driver, concert pianist, and at one point even 'browning up' to become a Middle Eastern prince. Gerry's programmes always thrived on joyful preposterousness, but *Joe 90* was perhaps a bit too silly and frothy, especially after the gripping war stories of *Captain Scarlet*, plus Joe's adventures seemed rather transparent target-demographic wish-fulfilment fantasies, and although Joe gets to kill an arms dealer with a grenade at the fiery conclusion of 'Hi-Jacked', the explosive action was scaled back. It was a novel concept with several exceptional episodes, although the

GERRY ANDERSON

COMPLETE GUIDE



Gerry-and-Sylvia-scripted pilot – an entirely hypothetical ‘here’s the sort of adventure Joe might have in the future’ scenario – wasn’t one.

Anderson stuck with the theme of whimsical espionage for Century 21’s next series, *The Secret Service*. It seems odd that, in a time of man-on-the-moon fever, with the whole planet looking to the stars, Anderson chose to cast self-styled ‘Professor of Gobbledegook’ Stanley Unwin as an elderly vicar-cum-secret agent (working for Gerry’s most amusingly convoluted acronym, BISHOP: British Intelligence Service Headquarters, Operation Priest), motoring a proto-Bessie yellow roadster around the hedgerows of his sleepy rural parish. When Grade saw the first episode he cancelled the series immediately; the remainder of the series was never fully networked. It seems odd that after a long, fruitful and trusted professional relationship, Anderson made an entire



Thunderbirds would find itself constantly rediscovered and reinvented.

series that his boss evidently found so baffling that he banished it forever from the public gaze. Perhaps this decision was misjudged, because *The Secret Service* is a delightful and audacious oddity, with Unwin’s inspired gobbledegook economically employed as a diversionary secret weapon whenever he needs to bamboozle someone. Modelwork and puppetry were intercut with live-action location footage in a quite disorientating way, and it almost feels like Anderson made a show that he knew would fail in order to hasten his long-desired move into live-action filming. Certainly, *The Secret Service* was the last the world saw of Supermarionation. Lew suggested the time was right to scrap the puppets, and Anderson relished the opportunity to at last hire real people who could walk, emote and pick things up.

Anderson had already mounted two unsuccessful live-action films – 1960’s cops-and-robbers short *Crossroads To Crime* and 1969’s parallel-Earth yarn

Doppelgänger – but at the beginning of the Seventies, Century 21 entered a bold new age of flesh-and-blood productions. Anderson finally turned his attention to the Moon, imagining that by 1980 it was a lookout base for intercepting alien invasions of Earth – which are accelerating as a nameless species attempts to harvest human organs. This was the world of *UFO*, a darker, broader, more complex and adult vision than had ever been possible in Supermarionation. The blend of tense procedural detail and explosive effects remained from *Thunderbirds*, along with the war of nerves with a formless enemy from *Captain Scarlet*, but the emotive capabilities of human actors gave the show an unprecedented dramatic intensity, and nobody at SHADO (Supreme Headquarters of the Alien Defence Organisation – usefully hidden under a film studio) personified this better than Ed Bishop’s obsessional and complicated Commander Straker. But it wasn’t all heart-rending melodrama; the SHADO vehicles were superbly realised, while glittery costumes were designed by polymath Sylvia (whose duties over the years extended from secretary to continuity and voice artist to writer, co-creator and fashion designer), but the camp, garish space-gear (and a tendency to linger on shots of actresses’ lycra-clad bottoms) sometimes obscured the profundity and versatility of *UFO* at its best.

It was to be Anderson’s only Seventies masterpiece. *The Protectors* was a generic bit of glamorous crime-fighting ITC fluff, of interest chiefly to Seventies London location-spotters and Robert Vaughn completists, and the uneven and uncomfortably Americanised *Space: 1999* – then the most expensive British TV series ever made – ended up a protracted, compromised disappointment, despite an intriguing premise (the Moon blown out of orbit by a nuclear explosion), fantastic guest stars (Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Brian Blessed and Bernard Cribbins), inevitably breathtaking model work and some great individual episodes in its first season. Also around this time, Gerry and Sylvia’s relationship fell apart, and her replacement (professionally speaking) Fred Freiburger wrought a number of changes to the show, resulting in a much-



Gerry at RAL Space, whose research he felt passionately about.

COMPLETE GUIDE TO GERRY ANDERSON



Thunderbirds was where Anderson's knack for iconic vehicle design reached its zenith.



Space: 1999, for all its flaws, is fondly recalled for its fantastic cameos.



"SOMETIMES IT WOULD GET SO HOT OUR PLASTICINE CHARACTERS WOULD MELT, OR SO COLD THEY WOULD BREAK" MARK WOOLLARD

➤ reviled second season, which limped on until the end of 1977. By then, Anderson had been working relentlessly on intensive production schedules for 20 years. With his marriage over and his biggest-ever project ending in ignominy, a break was in order.

In the early Eighties, repeats of Gerry's puppet masterpieces introduced a new generation to the golden age of Supermarionation; the time was right, he realised, for a return to puppetry, and with new creative partner Christopher Burr, set about devising his grand vision for the Eighties: *Terrahawks*. Premiering in 1983, *Terrahawks* was 'filmed in Supermacromation' (ie latex hand-puppets, which were cheaper and more manoeuvrable than the wooden marionettes of the Sixties) and marked a return to the evergreen theme of a world organisation defending Earth from alien attack. This time, though, the baddie was the star: the hideous, megalomaniacal and ever-so-faintly Thatcher-esque Zelda became a terrifying-but-hilarious mini-phenomenon in the mid-Eighties (pleasingly, Zelda was voiced by Denise Bryer, who had provided the voice of Twizzle in Anderson's first puppet show in

1957). Many hoping for an Eighties *Thunderbirds* were disappointed; more explicitly comedic than previous Gerry joints (confirmed by the casting of Windsor Davies as the voice of officious robot Sergeant Major Zero), *Terrahawks* had a much lower budget than usual ("All we had was a 16mm Mitchell camera invented in the Forties, capable of doing multiple exposures and a video feed with no playback," remembers special effects director Steve Begg, "and that was that"), and the music, such an important part of any Anderson series, had to be written and performed on synthesiser. Nevertheless, *Terrahawks* is extremely fondly remembered by the generation of Eighties kids for who it was designed, and the effects and models were inevitably spellbinding, the series acting as launchpad for a new wave of bright young engineers, designers and craftsmen.

One such was Mark Woollard, who worked with Gerry on his next production, his only out-and-out comedy: *Dick Spanner, PI*, a smashing stop-motion gumshoe spoof with the most humble of origins. "We filmed in old tin Nissen huts," recalls Mark. "The wind whistled through, blowing our cardboard sets about.

They jigger and jump on screen when you watch them back. Sometimes it would get so hot our plasticine characters would melt, or so cold they would break. But it was all good fun, and I got a crash course in animation, literally learning by doing."

Anderson returned to the role of creator in 1994 with the live-action *Space Precinct* (piloted as *Space Police* as far back as 1986), a glossy, big-budget, adult-orientated sci-fi police procedural for Sky One. Bad scheduling and low ratings led to the American backers cancelling it after one season, but Anderson wasn't gone long. In 1998, he collaborated with Cosgrove Hall on *Lavender Castle*, a charming series for younger children set aboard a thatched space-galleon searching for the mystical eponymous 'place of legend'. Animated with spectacular, imaginative CGI and stop-motion (and even featuring a cheeky Dick Spanner cameo), *Lavender Castle* reconnected Anderson with the innocent wonder and gentle whimsy of *Torchy*, and deserves to be a cult children's classic in its own right. After the triumphs and tragedies of 2005's *New Captain Scarlet*, in 2008 Anderson conceived an all-new idea for a book series containing all the



classic ingredients of Andersonic adventure in literary form: *Gemini Force One*. Two years into the writing process, however, Anderson was diagnosed with mixed dementia. This extraordinary man, a creative powerhouse since the advent of two-channel television, was still dictating new adventures into his eighties, even while bed-bound and deteriorating from the disease which, on Boxing Day 2012, took his life.

To ensure that Anderson's final project remains free from editorial interference, his son Jamie launched a Kickstarter campaign to raise enough money to complete and publish *Gemini Force One* as Gerry intended. Enthusiastic supporters pledged over £33,000 – almost £10,000 more than the project's goal. From his earliest black-and-white experiments in puppetry to the latest developments in online crowdsourcing, Gerry Anderson's triumphant vision is set to endure for generations to come.

"To have one smash show is a gift, to get three is a blessing," reflects Mark Woollard, his ex-colleague and friend. "To have the back catalogue that Gerry has is, there's no other word for it: genius. He just kept on getting it right."

Meet the stars and creators of many Anderson productions at the first official convention, Andercon. Held 19-20 April at The Park Inn Hotel overlooking London's Heathrow Airport, the event includes VFX displays, exhibitions of art and props, and much, much more. For details and the complete listing, see www.andercon.co.uk.

TOP 5 GERRY ANDERSON VEHICLES

The wheels and rockets that birthed a generation of gearheads



5. SUPERCAR

"It flashes across the sky – it zooms through water – it speeds over land! It's the marvel of the age!" Developed in Black Rock, Nevada by Professor Popkiss and Dr Beaker – or alternatively, knocked up in Slough by Reg Hill with a lump of plywood and some chrome trim – the seven-foot Superkar cost a cool £1,000 to make and, it turns out, was predominantly red. **Pick up *Supercar: The Complete Series* on DVD for £22.69.**



4. SPECTRUM PURSUIT VEHICLE

Secreted all over the world and claimable on production of a Spectrum pass, Captain Scarlet's armoured all-terrain SPV went on to become Dinky's best-selling toy. Seats faced backwards for greater safety, which was handy as SPVs often crashed headfirst into buildings, mountains and trees at 200mph. **Pick up the *Captain Scarlet: Complete Series* DVD box set for £10.75.**



3. SKYDIVER

SHADO's magnificent nuclear submarine is a two-for-the-price-of-one deal, incorporating the (pre-Murdoch-branded) rocket Sky One that launched into space from the sea bed. The sexiest bit of kit in a series distinguished by sexy bits of kit, 'Sub-Smash' was Skydiver's tense and gripping showcase episode. **Pick up *UFO: Volumes 1-4 Collector's Edition* DVD box set for £12.75.**



2. STINGRAY

Originally designed by Reg Hill but modified by prolific craftsman Derek Meddings, the pair evidently disagreed on the details; Derek later wrote "I managed to persuade him to modify his Stingray design to create a more believable craft." This curvy, streamlined atomic vessel remains surely the grooviest submarine in TV history. **Pick up *Stingray: The Complete Series* DVD box set for £9.38.**



1. FAB1

Lady Penelope's seven-foot pink Parker-driven attack-Roller is surely the greatest screen icon of Sixties British engineering. Designed by Derek Meddings, the construction of FAB1 was enthusiastically overseen by Rolls-Royce, who donated a full-sized radiator grille to be used for close-up filming. **Pick up *Thunderbirds: The Complete Collection* on Blu-ray for £40.**



See more incredible Anderson vehicles at Andercon, where original props of the FAB1, the Model T Ford 'Gabriel' from *The Secret Service*, a replica of Straker's car from *UFO*, a surviving moon buggy from *Space: 1999* and Rolls Royce's specially built 'FAB1Million' Ghost!

Find out more at Andercon.co.uk.



FLASHBACK

THE NEVERENDING STORY

FROM LUCKDRAGONS TO WEREWOLVES, AND ROCKBITERS TO GIANT TURTLES, THE NEVERENDING STORY IS PACKED WITH SOME OF THE MOST BELOVED CREATURES IN FANTASY CINEMA. TO MARK THE FILM'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY, SCIFINOW TALKS TO SPECIAL EFFECTS DIRECTOR BRIAN JOHNSON ABOUT MAKING DREAMS A REALITY, THE PROBLEMS WITH FALKOR AND WHY THE HARDEST THING TO DESIGN IS NOTHING...

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

These days, it seems like Hollywood can't get enough grit in their sci-fi/fantasy movies, especially when it comes to younger audiences, but we all know that darkness in fantasy is nothing new. The Eighties saw a stream of films aimed at young people that found their way into children's hearts and nightmares. Take *The NeverEnding Story*: if Atreyu fails in his mission, the universe will be consumed by Nothing, and darkness will rule over everything. In case we don't understand the gravity of the situation, Atreyu's horse Artax drowns in a muddy bog of despair as his master watches and cries out. It doesn't get much bleaker than that.

The NeverEnding Story has much more in its arsenal than darkness, however. There's a reason why it has become one of the most beloved children's films of all time: it's a beautifully realised fantasy with a simple but wonderfully effective core concept and, lest we forget, some truly spectacular effects work. At the time, *The NeverEnding Story* was the most expensive film ever produced in Germany. It was going to be an epic, and the filmmakers knew that they needed the best in effects to bring Michael Ende's novel to life. By 1984, Brian Johnson had worked on *The Empire Strikes Back* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and had won an Oscar for his work on *Alien*. Fortunately for the producers, he was on the lookout for a new project.

"What actually happened was I was negotiating with [*Dune* producer] Raffaella di Laurentiis to do a picture for her," he tells SciFiNow. "But when I saw what was up for grabs, I thought 'Well, I must pick something else.' Because I wasn't a fan of the way Dino Di Laurentiis and Raffaella di Laurentiis made their movies. Dino would ride roughshod over the director and just change everything. And then *The NeverEnding Story* came up."

**"NOAH
HATHAWAY WAS
A BIT OF A PAIN
IN THE ARSE,
FRANKLY"
BRIAN JOHNSON**

The film required Johnson to relocate to Germany, where shooting would take place at Bavaria Studios. The budget was set at 60 million DM, which roughly correlated to \$27 million. It may have been the biggest-budgeted film in Germany at the time, but the amount was relatively low given what Johnson was used to working with. "It wasn't a big budget by American standards," he tells us. "[Filming in Germany]

was different, there's no question about that. Bavaria Studios had a crew of people, some of them were really brilliant, and others weren't, but that happens all over the place. But there were certain things that happened that used to make us wonder what was going on.

"We needed a big blue screen, so I designed this, I think it was actually at the time the world's largest. It was about 95 by 35 feet, and was lit with special lights. We had two made, and had one shipped to Bavaria so we could start setting up things. The plastic that was used was temperature critical, so I had a note sent to all the departments saying under no circumstances during the winter should the stage doors be left open on the big stage because it could possibly damage the screen. So what happens? We put the thing up, and in about the second week of testing I went in and the stage doors were wide open. It was about minus five degrees, and a spark dropped a GOBO, which is a thing you put in front of the light, dropped it straight through the screen and made a huge hole, and that's before we'd even started shooting. We didn't know whether that was sabotage or just inefficiency. But in the main it was a great studio with great people, and we got the job done."

Johnson singles out director Wolfgang Petersen for particular praise. At the time, Petersen might have seemed like an odd choice for a children's fantasy epic given that his previous film was the intense, claustrophobic submarine drama *Das Boot*. ➡

THE NEVERENDING STORY

FLASHBACK





**"WHEN YOU READ
A SCRIPT AND
IT SAYS THERE'S
NOTHING, YOU
THINK 'HOW AM I
GOING TO SHOW
NOTHING?'"**

BRIAN JOHNSON

However, Johnson explains that Petersen trusted him to get the job done. "He was charming, he knew what he wanted, and he left me to do most of the second unit stuff, and the wolf sequence and things like that. He was more interested in the artists and those sorts of things."

However, there is one of Petersen's suggestions that Johnson has never been a fan of. Surprisingly, given how iconic he's become, the director of special effects doesn't have fond memories of the luckdragon Falkor. "The shaggy golden retriever/dragon, which was Wolfgang's interpretation, worked fine, but it didn't really do it for me," he reveals. "It was huge and it was difficult moving him around; we couldn't make him walk. In those days it was impossible; now, with computer graphics, it would be a completely different matter."

Computer graphics may have improved Falkor, but Johnson is quick to stress that CGI could not have had the same effect by itself. "I notice that three-dimensional

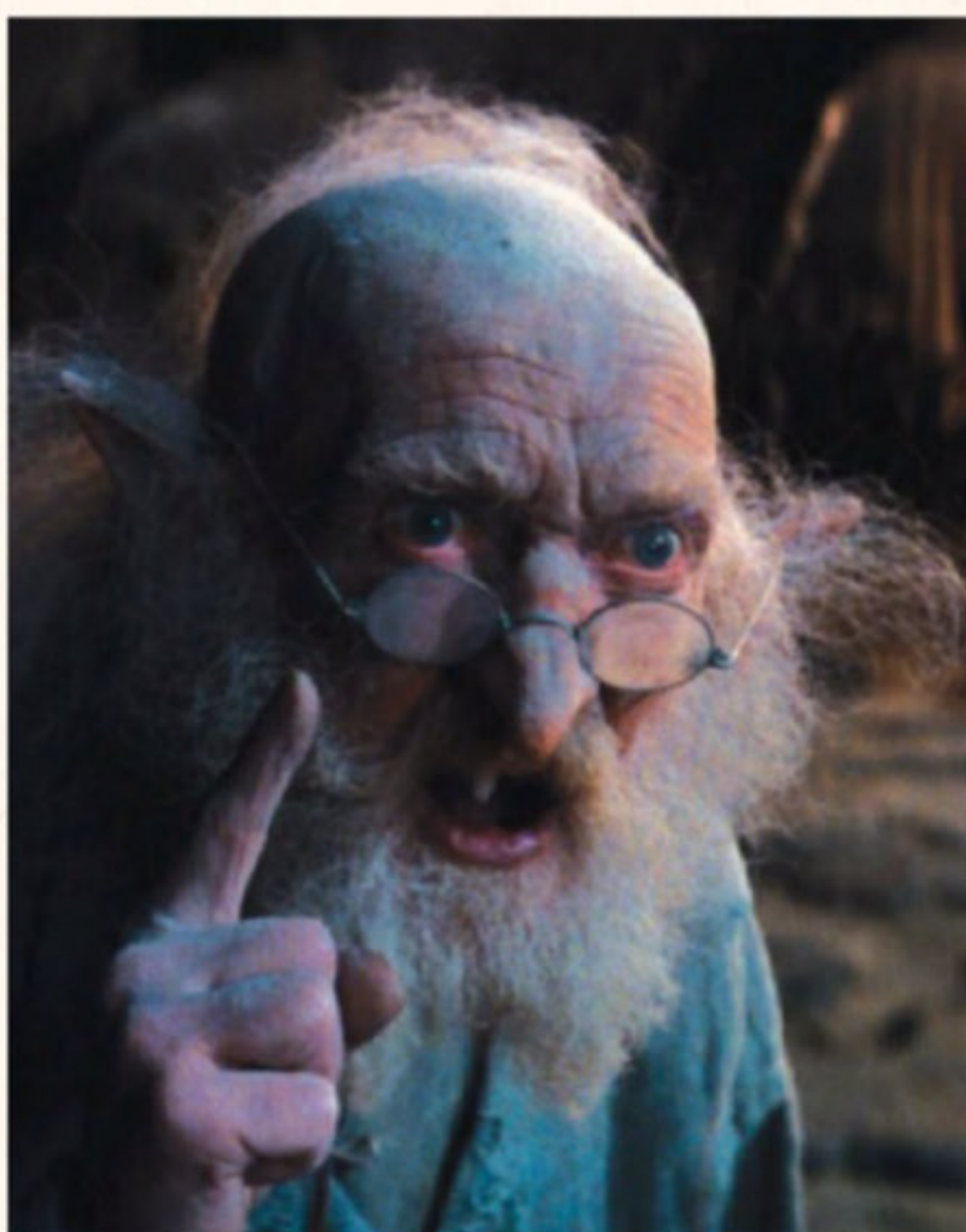
models are being combined with CGI now, because it does definitely work. All CGI; it's okay and it serves its purpose, but I like to actually watch what's on the screen a bit. I'm not a fan of 3D either. Sometimes, the shots are just done for 3D, and they don't really enhance the production value. It's production value that we're aiming for, at least I was; big production value. Big bang for the bucks, and it's not my money that I'm dealing with; it's somebody else's. To just shower money at stuff and say, 'We'll do it in post-production,' which saves a million faces because if you haven't worked it out for the main unit shoot. You just say 'Oh, we'll do that in post-production, it will be alright.' That's why you have the CGI credits run on forever."

Falkor may have been a disappointment to his creator, but it's a relief to hear that Johnson is still proud of the bulk of the effects work in the film. One of the many aspects that impresses when rewatching the film is how much personality the team managed to bring to the creatures. There's a story that Gmork actually injured actor Noah Hathaway during their big fight sequence, but Johnson remembers it differently. "We didn't have any problems with Gmork; not that I can remember. Because Germany is a land full of puppeteers, I got some amazing puppeteers to do all the manipulation; they were really great. That was a lot due to my engineer, who was an Italian guy called Giuseppe Tortora, who was absolutely brilliant with mechanisms, and also the puppeteers, who did have time to practice and everything, but they did get a real feeling for movements and stuff, so that worked out really well, I think."

The creatures are, of course, the most fondly remembered element of *The NeverEnding Story*, but it's important not to underestimate another challenge of the film: the Nothing. The world of Fantasia is being consumed by this darkness, and it was vital to find a way to depict the ever-advancing, all-encompassing void. "When you read a script and it says there's nothing, one's mind takes a few leaps, because you think, 'How am I going to show nothing?'" laughs Johnson. "It sounds good on the page, but when you



Fondly remembered by many, it's safe to say that *The NeverEnding Story* has achieved cult status.



THE NEVERENDING STORY

FLASHBACK



Johnson praised the acting ability of Barret Oliver, who played Bastian.

Yet to reap the benefits of today's technology, the tech wizard had to be more creative.



actually come down to dealing with it, what is it? So I just had this idea of moving everything like it was all moving into the distance and then breaking up. We did tricks with the cameras so that stuff flew out the sides of the shots rather than onto the floor and stuff like that."

Luckdragons and wolves aside, there was no way that Petersen or Johnson could get around that old Hollywood maxim, 'Never work with children or animals'. The film's two main characters are Bastian (Barret Oliver), the boy reading the book, and Atreyu (Noah Hathaway), the boy who takes on the epic quest. "Well, Barret Oliver was an absolute gem," Johnson remembers. "He was just the best thing ever. Noah Hathaway was a bit of a pain in the arse, frankly. It was very difficult for Wolfgang to get anything out of him. Barret Oliver delivered all the time; he was just brilliant."

With the trials and tribulations of filming complete, Johnson and his team might reasonably have felt entitled to a bit of recognition. However, despite the film's success at the box office, *The NeverEnding Story* was almost universally ignored when it came to awards season, which Johnson blames on the attitude of the

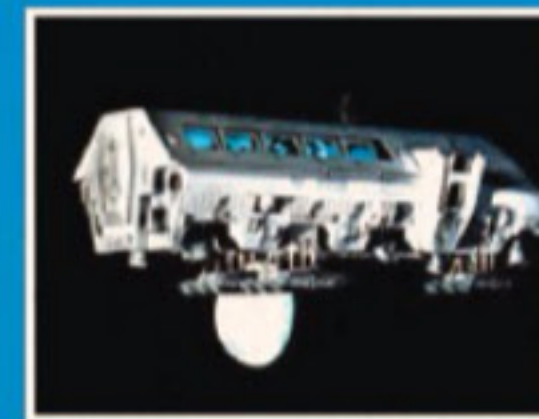
American distributor. "Warner Bros, in their infinite wisdom, didn't get us a nomination or put us forward, which I think is just a shame, really. [Warner] didn't really regard it as a movie; they didn't even get it nominated for Academy Awards. We were shattered about that because they had other pictures nominated that hardly had anything in them. Because the film was made in Germany, I don't think they thought it was going to be much, but it didn't turn out like that."

Indeed, it didn't. The nostalgia and love for *The NeverEnding Story* grows stronger with every passing year, and the film's effects stand toe-to-toe with the very best of the time. Looking back on the film decades later, Johnson tells us that he's delighted that it has stood the test of time. "I'm immensely proud of my crew, and I feel very satisfied that what we did on the first one wasn't eclipsed by the second or third, frankly. We tried really hard, and we did a pretty good job." 

A Q&A screening of *The NeverEnding Story* with Brian Johnson will be taking place at the Genesis Cinema in London's East End on 9 March at 3pm. For more information, visit www.genescinema.co.uk.

BUILDING BETTER MODELS

How Brian Johnson shaped three of science fiction's masterpieces



2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)

One of Johnson's first jobs in the film industry was on Stanley Kubrick's classic,

which must have come as a surprise to his former employer. "I went from working on *Thunderbirds*, which I left – Gerry [Anderson] told me I'd never work in the film industry again – and I wound up on *2001* working with people like Doug Trumbull and Stanley Kubrick. Stanley made me realise that if you keep asking 'Why?' people either run out of answers or you have to go and shoot something else. He wasn't the most knowledgeable in terms of visual effects, but he was a hell of a director, and if he didn't understand those things, then that's what we were there for!"



Alien (1979)

Johnson won an Oscar for his special effects work on Ridley Scott's *Alien*, and tells us that the Nostromo was a

work in progress until the last minute. "I knew Ridley was going to change things, because he always did. I had a model of Nostromo made about 14 inches long, quite well detailed. Then I would go to Shepperton Studios to see Ridley, and he'd go 'We need to add this in, we need to do this and do that.' In the meantime we began to build the craft. But I waited until Ridley had made about ten different changes before we committed to building the complete thing. Even then we still added to the exterior, because Ridley said 'Let's have more of those whiskers,' those spike things that were sticking out of the front. He added loads of those."



Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (1980)

As if working with Kubrick and Scott wasn't enough, Johnson also left his mark on

George Lucas' *Star Wars* as the special effects supervisor on *The Empire Strikes Back*. "It's very satisfying to see that you were there at the sharp end when it all started," he remembers. "And then you can always improve. When we did *The Empire Strikes Back*, the R2-D2s didn't work, and the radio-controlled ones didn't work in the first one too well. In fact, in the first screenings you could see the wires pulling him along the corridor. But we looked at what they'd done and improved on that. It will be the same with Nostromo and all those other things; the new people will come along with their money and improve on it."

IN 2001, A LOW-BUDGET INDIE TOOK THE WEREWOLF STORY BY THE THROAT AND MADE IT FRESH, FUNNY AND SCARY. WE LOOK BACK AT HOW THE FITZGERALD SISTERS FOUND THEMSELVES GOING THROUGH SOME CHANGES AND WHY GINGER SNAPS CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF THE BEST FILMS TO HOWL AT THE MOON...

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL



GINGER SNAPS



Film

RUNNING TIME:

108 minutes

RELEASE DATE:

29 June 2001

DIRECTOR:

John Fawcett

WRITER: Karen Walton

CAST: Emily Perkins,

Katharine Isabelle, Kris

Lemche, Mimi Rogers

About

Something in the small town of Bailey Downs is tearing local dogs to pieces, but outcast sisters Ginger and Brigitte Fitzgerald are more interested in plotting their escape by any means necessary. While out pulling a prank on popular Trina Sinclair, Ginger is bitten by what looks like a wolf, but the two escape when the beast is hit by a van. When Ginger's body starts changing, their mother thinks that she's finally entering womanhood, but Brigitte knows the gruesome truth. As the beast inside Ginger begins to break free, Brigitte is forced to step out from her big sister's shadow and find a cure before it's too late.

Think of the classic werewolf, and who springs to mind? Lon Chaney Jr in *The Wolfman*? David Naughton in *An American Werewolf In London*? Or is it Jack Nicholson pissing on James Spader in *Wolf*? The lycanthrope is a traditionally masculine story, as the tortured hero allows the beast inside him to come forth. Hair, teeth and claws are outward manifestations of rage, strength and lust.

"No one ever thinks chicks do shit like this," the bloodsoaked Ginger (Katharine Isabelle) tells her sister Brigitte (Emily Perkins), as they bury a murdered schoolmate in their garden shed. "A girl can only be a slut, a bitch, a tease, or the virgin next door." Karen Walton's screenplay for John Fawcett's *Ginger Snaps* blends Kevin Williamson-esque self-awareness, a whip-smart interpretation of the werewolf myth and a truly affecting story of two sisters to create one of the seminal horror films of the new millennium.

The major selling point of *Ginger Snaps* is its interpretation of the werewolf legend, loaded as it is with meaty subtext, through the figures of teenage girls. While writers like Angela Carter took this approach in a more classical context, *Ginger Snaps* tears it to bloody shreds. The energy and force with which Walton tackles the myth's feminisation yields incredibly powerful results. Leaving dunky 'that time of the month' jokes aside, the trials of adolescence are portrayed with unflinching honesty. The "total hormonal toilet" of high school is a battle ground, while their overly interested mother (Mimi Rogers) is desperate to provide advice on issues she knows nothing about. She's delighted when Ginger begins menstruating, while

her daughter is despondent that her body is betraying her will to not conform.

The film plays Ginger's transformation into womanhood in a more comedic fashion than her journey into lycanthropy. Brigitte suggests a packet of tampons that comes with a free calendar, while the unnaturally cheery school nurse explains in graphic detail what Ginger and Brigitte can expect to go through "for the next 40 years," including a "thick, syrupy, voluminous discharge," while Fawcett's angle and lighting choices give the scene a distinctly nauseating feel. This is part of the reality that the sisters are so set on escaping from.

"A WHIP-SMART INTERPRETATION OF THE WEREWOLF MYTH AND A TRULY AFFECTING STORY"

This brings us to the film's starting point and the sisters' planned escape method. It's hard to believe that there's anything new to say about the horror of adolescence, but *Ginger Snaps* makes those old wounds feel fresh. Outsider status is all too often conveyed by hair, make-up, wardrobe and Nine Inch Nails posters. Brigitte and Ginger Fitzgerald's alienation is utterly convincing. The shot that introduces us to younger sister Brigitte is the alternative hero's entrance, as the garage door slides up to reveal her in slow motion, carrying a chainsaw, a blowtorch, a can of gasoline and a length of piping.

Ginger's entrance is similarly wry, framed from behind with a kitchen knife poised above her wrist as the television

asks, "Can this happen to a normal woman?" Their discussion of their planned suicide is disarmingly frank and funny. "Wrists are for girls," dismisses Ginger. "I'm slitting my throat." Brigitte's main concern is that their decision to off themselves won't be taken seriously, but Ginger reassured her that taking their own lives will be "the ultimate fuck you... Us dead'll be the shit B, trust me."

The Fitzgeralds' glamourisation of their own deaths reaches a mournful, self-conscious peak during the opening credit sequence; a montage of gory staged suicides for a school project that beautifully sets the mood. Over the course of the

film, Ginger will turn this darkness against others, and Brigitte will attempt to stop her. The two girls happily make with the gore for pranks and projects, but Brigitte's wide-eyed revulsion when confronted with the bloody remains of local dogs, not to mention her horror as Ginger's body changes, show her detached facade to be just that.

It's not just about blood, though, and Ginger's transformation isn't purely physical; it's also unapologetically sexual in a way that is definitely not aimed at fulfilling the needs of the film's male characters. Jason McCarty (Jesse Moss) may be thrilled when Ginger agrees to go out with him, but when he attempts to assert his masculinity in the backseat of his car, she reminds him who's in charge. ➤



Ginger Snaps' metaphors for growing up are brutally and graphically realised.



The relationship between sisters Ginger and Brigitte is at the heart of the story.



GINGER SNAPS

RETRO CLASSIC

CLASSIC QUOTES

"JUST SO YOU KNOW... THE WORDS 'JUST' AND 'CRAMPS', THEY DON'T GO TOGETHER"

GINGER

"IF I WASN'T HERE WOULD YOU EAT HER?"

BRIGITTE

"OUT BY 16 OR DEAD ON THE SCENE, BUT TOGETHER FOREVER"

GINGER

"WRISTS ARE FOR GIRLS. I'M SLITTING MY THROAT"

GINGER

"WHY DON'T THEY JUST CATCH THAT THING? HOW HARD COULD IT BE IN A PLACE FULL OF DEAD ENDS?"

BRIGITTE

"OUR LITTLE GIRL'S A YOUNG WOMAN NOW"

PAMELA

"BITTEN? ON A FULL MOON. NOW YOU'RE HAIRY?"

BRIGITTE

"YOU KNOW, WE'RE ALMOST NOT EVEN RELATED ANYMORE"

GINGER

"MAYBE I LIKE MY EDGE"

GINGER



➤ Ginger's sexuality grows stronger the more monstrous she becomes, further emphasising her growing distance from Brigitte. It's confrontational and violent, challenging the idea of the male as the sexually dominant figure. "It feels so good, Brigitte," she murmurs after a gruesome kill. "It's like touching yourself. You know every move, right on the fucking dot. And after, you see fucking fireworks. Supernovas. I'm a goddamn force of nature. I feel like I could do just about anything." Her post-transformation protectiveness of Brigitte is intrinsically linked to sexuality, too. Ginger dismisses Sam's help because she's convinced he wants to get in her sister's pants, while she brutally murders the janitor in front of Brigitte because "I don't like the way he looks at you!"

The sisters' unhealthy co-dependence is what gives *Ginger Snaps* its heart. When

"IT'S THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO SISTERS THAT GIVES GINGER SNAPS ITS REAL POWER"

Ginger steps out of the basement and into the world, Brigitte is forced to not only take responsibility, but to talk to somebody other than her sister for what could very well be the first time, forging an awkward friendship with local drug dealer Sam (Kris Lemche). Isabelle's barnstorming performance is thrilling to watch, but Perkins' more subdued turn is what keeps us invested in their relationship, as well as the idea that this is happening in a familiar suburban town.

The film's naturalism is retained by Sam's willingness to accept the fact

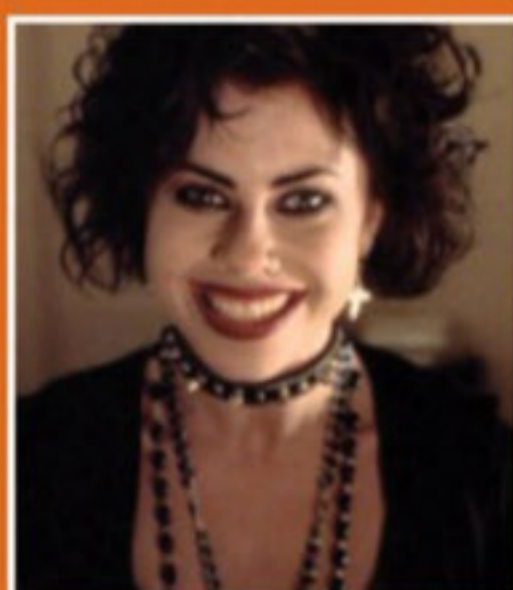
that they're dealing with a werewolf after hitting the one who bit Ginger with his van after seeing its "human circumcised dick." Together with Brigitte, he looks for practical solutions for an impractical problem. Walton's script never overplays this; there's no list of films to be referenced. Instead, Sam suggests silver because it clears up infections, and Brigitte finds monkshood in Pamela's flower arrangement.

Glimpses into the Fitzgerald home go some way to explaining why Brigitte and Ginger have turned out the way

FREAKS AND GEEKS

Five characters who just don't fit in

NANCY DOWNS THE CRAFT



1 Fairuza Balk goes bad as the leader of the band of goth-tinged aspiring witches who attempt to take on new girl Robin Tunney in this cult classic.

THE LOSERS' CLUB IT



2 The seven young outcasts, including a young Seth Green and Emily Perkins, band together to protect each other and stop Tim Curry's evil clown.

TIMMY CHERRY FALLS



3 Best friend to Brittany Murphy's heroine, Timmy operates outside the law to discover the truth about the local serial killer. "Holy hymens, Batman! They're killing virgins!"

GINGER SNAPS

RETRO CLASSIC



Emily Perkins would go on to star in sequel *Ginger Snaps 2* and prequel *Ginger Snaps Back*.

they have. Their mother Pamela is a relentlessly cheery, wittering mother hen, while their father Henry (John Bougeois) seems generally bewildered by everything going on around him, and is resentful for it. There's something so perfectly nightmarish about the immaculate little suburban life that Pamela has created for herself, with meals that resemble magazine clippings more than real food. The children in her basement may have gone down a dark path, but she refuses to let them go, even when she finds out what Ginger has done. "First thing tomorrow I'll let the house fill up with gas and I'll light a match," she tells Brigitte. "We'll start fresh, just us girls."

Pamela will never understand Ginger and Brigitte, not really. The bond that they share is so strong that it excludes any possibilities other than life or death together. Their suicide pact is about this

very issue: the fact that they could not face life without each other. It's this relationship between the two sisters that gives *Ginger Snaps* its real power, which continues to impress nearly 15 years after its release. Genre savvy and self-awareness might give the film sharp teeth, but it's the film's unexpected heart that stays with you: the pain that Brigitte and Ginger feel as their relationship tears is shared by the audience. The final fight isn't as important as the film's final moments, with Brigitte collapsed over the monstrous corpse of her sister. Where does she go now? What does she have left?

An underrated sequel and muddled prequel attempted to match the first film, but *Ginger Snaps* is one of the best teen horrors of this century. With Bailey Downs making an appearance in John Fawcett's excellent TV show *Orphan Black*, there has never been a better time to go back. 🐾

WATCH FIRST



CARRIE (1976)

Brian De Palma's adaptation of Stephen King's debut is a touchstone for the traumas of adolescence portrayed here.

WATCH NEXT



AMERICAN MARY (2012)

Katharine Isabelle is excellent as a surgeon with a special skill in the Soska sisters' restrained, witty and moving revenge story.

STOKELY MITCHELL THE FACULTY



4 Everyone knows that the best character in *The Faculty* was Clea DuVall's improbably named Stokely, who thought that the only alien in high school was her.

PAULINE EXCISION



5 AnnaLynne McCord's Pauline gets her hands dirty while uncovering the mysteries of the adolescent body in what is one of the best teen horrors in recent memory.

YOUR TAKE ON THE CLASSIC

WHAT YOU THOUGHT @SCIFINOW



"A fresh twist on the old-hat werewolf story. *Juno* meets *The Wolf Man*. Katharine Isabelle is great." @cmdrsheppard



"A novel approach, a wonderful female-centric movie with heart, emotional honesty and wit." @sharksarecool



"I confess it isn't as awesome now as it was when I was in my early 20s. Loved narrative of female anger." @cai_boxer



"I love the *Ginger Snaps* trilogy, my best mate hates it. Can watch it over and over again." @1198020000



"It's a freakin' awesome werewolf movie. :)" @mana_junkie



THE SCIFINOW SPACED QUIZ

THIS NINETIES BRIT-COM WAS THE REAL BIG BANG OF GEEKY TV SHOWS ABOUT A GROUP OF DYSFUNCTIONAL FLATMATES, BUT HOW CLOSELY WERE YOU WATCHING?

MASTERMINDS

1. Who was the director of *Spaced*?
2. True or false: the show was filmed on just one camera.
3. Who did Simon Pegg co-write *Spaced* with?
4. *Spaced* marked the very first acting gig for who?
5. The episode where Mike sees zombies everywhere after playing too much *Resident Evil* inspired *Shaun Of The Dead*. True or false?

PEGG

6. What must Tim and Daisy do in order to rent the flat on 23 Meteor Street?

7. Name the dog that became a sort of child substitute for the pair?
8. What was the movie that Tim called a "jumped-up firework display of a toy advert"?
9. What was Tim's day job?
10. Which *Scooby Doo* character did Tim used to pretend to be when he was a child?

FROST

11. What was Mike banned from doing for six months?
12. What does Mike give Daisy and Tim as a housewarming gift?
13. What is the name of the robot Mike enters in the TV show *Robot Wars*?

14. Where did Mike meet his best friend Tim?
15. Who becomes Mike's new flatmate after he moves out of Tim and Daisy's pad?

THE REST

16. What was the title of the women's magazine that Daisy had a job interview for?
17. What four adjectives does Brian say sums up his artwork?
18. Who is Daisy's best friend, despite being really bitchy?
19. What career would Martha had enjoyed if she hadn't broken her leg and liked booze too much?
20. Name the members of the show's love triangle.

DIDN'T HE/SHE DO WELL! See how you did with our arbitrary scoring system



16-20

TIM BISLEY

It's good to see you make a triumphant comeback. Clearly, your fanboy-like enthusiasm for everything cult has won you oodles of points – and you didn't even need to pray to Buffy for help this time.

11-15

BRIAN TOPP

You may seem like a sociopath, but we know you're just shy and "a bit more complex than watercolours". You keep an eye on everyone, so we can't trust that you weren't watching as we wrote the answers to this quiz.

6-10

MARSHA KLEIN

Since Tim and Daisy moved in, you've never been happier. You may not know that the "professional young couple" aren't the real deal, but we bet you scored highly on the Brian-related questions.

0-5

DAISY STEINER

You have dreams of being a writer, but can't put any words on the page. Face up to your problems and inexplicable love for Tim, and one day you'll land a job at *Flaps* magazine.

ANSWERS: 1. EDGAR WRIGHT 2. TRUE 3. JESSICA HYNES 4. NICK FROST 5. TRUE 6. POSE AS A COUPLE 7. COULIN 8. STAR WARS: THE PHANTOM MENACE 9. GRAPHIC ARTIST 10. FRED 11. PAINTBALLING 12. LANDMINE 13. PRIVATE IRON 14. TERRITORIAL ARMY 15. MARSHA 16. FLAPS 17. ANGER, FEAR, PAIN AND AGGRESSION 18. TWIST 19. TWIST 20. MARSHA, BRIAN AND TWIST

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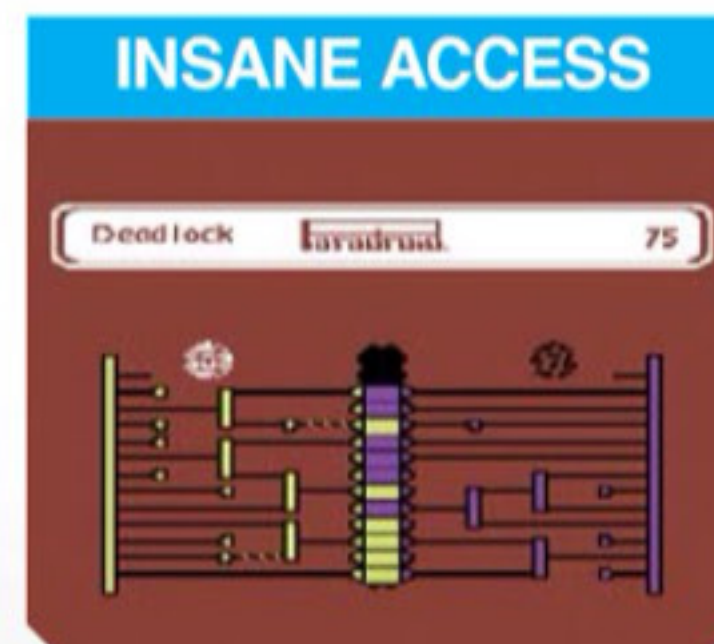
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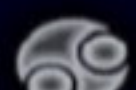
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